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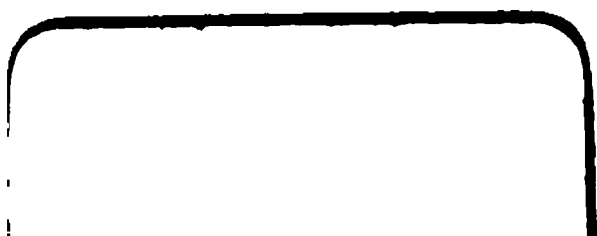


LIFE AND WORKS

OF

HORACE MANN

VOL. II.













LIFE AND WORKS

OF

HORACE MANN

VOL. II.



3

# ANNUAL REPORTS

OF THE

SECRETARY OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
OF MASSACHUSETTS FOR THE  
YEARS 1837-1838

INCLUDING THE FIRST ANNUAL REPORT OF THE  
BOARD OF EDUCATION

TO WHICH ARE PREFIXED

LECTURES ON EDUCATION

BY

HORACE MANN

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*[Original Dedication of "Lectures on Education."]*

TO

HIS EXCELLENCY

GEORGE N. BRIGGS,

GOVERNOR OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS, AND EX-OFFICIO

Chairman of the Board of Education,

AND TO THE OTHER MEMBERS OF SAID BOARD,

*THIS VOLUME, PREPARED AT THEIR REQUEST,*

IS GRATEFULLY DEDICATED,

BY

*THE AUTHOR.*





## PREFACE TO THE NEW EDITION.

---

THIS new and enlarged edition of the works of Horace Mann is presented to the public in response to a continuing demand for Mr. Mann's educational writings. Fifty years have elapsed since the period during which the twelve Reports of the first Secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education were issued, — a half century of extraordinary advance in national prosperity and power, in mechanical, scientific, and intellectual discovery and accomplishment. There is a vast difference between the limited horizon of state effort, and the struggle to reach the public consciousness of isolated communities, that characterized the work of those earlier days, and the present broad sweep of national educational endeavor, rushing onward unchecked by the curb of a regard either for individual independence or for depth of disciplinary foundation. It seems hardly reasonable to expect that much of actual practical value should be found in so antiquated a collection, and it was but natural to meet the criticism that these papers

were obsolete. But, in spite of the fact that they were written with the chief aim of influencing practical and immediate action, and notwithstanding that many of the illustrations are unfamiliar to the experiences of the present generation, and that the forms of philosophic language used might lead the superficial reader to undervalue the deeper-lying philosophic truth, yet the broad principles of education rest upon the eternal truths of mental and moral philosophy, which cannot become obsolete, and any deductions from them that are true to nature must possess a permanent value.

It will be admitted by all, that the grasp of first principles, the fundamental study of social and political philosophy, has not kept pace with the rapid advance of the country in material prosperity. If practical, popular, homely truths upon the value of education under a republican government were needed fifty years ago, they are needed now. If they were of interest then, they will be of interest now. Granted that pedagogic methods, that psychology, have made long strides in advance, that the discipular colt is less often driven to the waters of knowledge, but is more frequently engaged to drink at its fountains by the sweetness of the draught and the natural impulse of healthful thirst, it yet remains true that the citizens of a democratic state will ever need a spur or an inspiration, a reminder or a guide, in order to retain a firm hold upon the

underlying principles of national educational polity.

It is believed that there is still a field of usefulness open for these volumes, — that, especially in the newer portions of our country, where the problems of public education are in a more fluid state, there is much of practical wisdom to be derived from their pages, and that, for that perennially new arm of our public service, the teachers of youth, there will be found here both instruction and inspiration.

A few years after Mr. Mann's death there were published two volumes of his writings, containing his "Lectures on Education," and the major part of his Reports as Secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education. The present edition, in four volumes, is an enlargement of the former. The new matter consists of the larger part of the "Eighth Report," wholly omitted in the former edition; the "Oration delivered before the Authorities of the City of Boston, July 4, 1842," an eloquent appeal to the citizens of the republic for the education of the people; copious extracts from the ten volumes of the "Common School Journal;" and later addresses on subjects connected with education, belonging to the period of Mr. Mann's presidency of Antioch College. To the whole is appended a translation of an appreciative review, by Félix Pécaut, of a French publication by M. J. Gaufres, entitled "Horace Mann's Work and Writings."

The selection of papers for incorporation into this collection has not been unattended with difficulties. Mr. Mann's name is known chiefly in connection with education, and it seemed best to limit these volumes strictly to educational matters. Some early literary or patriotic addresses, which might have possessed a personal interest, were considered, but passed over. Legal arguments are extant that might have served to illustrate a style of writing less popularized in form ; and Mr. Mann, during his legislative career in Massachusetts, delivered speeches upon subjects as dissimilar as railroads and the care of the insane, religious liberty and the laws concerning intemperance. During the earlier congressional stage of the national struggle against slavery and disunion, Mr. Mann was called away for a time from his educational labors, "to assist," as he says, "in securing the freedom of man," since "before a man can be educated, he must be a free man." A number of his "Letters and Speeches on Slavery," written during this period, were collected and published at the time. While president of Antioch College, he officiated with other members of the college faculty, as was the plan of that institution, in conducting religious services, and a volume of "Twelve Sermons," delivered by him, was subsequently published. Many other writings, of various form and amount,<sup>1</sup> have been omitted from the

<sup>1</sup> See Note at end of Preface.

present collection, in which the aim has been, not so much to illustrate the man, as to put within the reach of the present generation his educational doctrines and his inspiring words.

Even in regard to educational matters pure and simple, it has been necessary to make selections. Much that had temporary or at most merely historical value in the "Reports," was omitted in the former edition, and remains so in this. The "Common School Controversy," so-called, which excited a lively interest in its day, and which still furnishes spicy reading to the student of educational progress in Massachusetts, has, after consideration, been wholly omitted. It is, in the first place, voluminous, and of such a nature that no abstract of it could be made. Any quotations would involve at least an equal amount of quotation from Mr. Mann's opponents, which would not be appropriate in a collection of Mr. Mann's writings. But the chief reason for the omission lies in the fact that the controversy was largely temporary, local and personal, and that whatever lesson it teaches is better learned otherwise.<sup>2</sup> Other controversies there were, especially one dealing with the matter of religion in the schools. The arguments of these letters were embodied in the twelfth "Report," and may be found there. One of the means made use of by Mr. Mann during his incumbency of the office of Secretary

<sup>2</sup> See Note at end of Preface.

of the Board of Education, for reaching the popular ear on matters of educational importance, was the "Common School Journal," which he conducted for ten years, partly at his own expense, and almost wholly by his own unrequited labor. His chief editorial articles, — annual addresses or introductions, — have been for the most part embodied in this collection. Other articles, of varying character and amount, have been retained, where they seemed to possess intrinsic interest, or to illustrate the personality of the author, while an even larger quantity of matter has been omitted.

It cannot be expected that, in making these selections, the editor's judgment has never been at fault, but it is believed that no article has been retained which does not contain either a valuable truth, an eloquent and inspiring period, or an interesting personal or historical reference.

GEORGE COMBE MANN.

*December, 1890.*

<sup>1</sup> A lecture entitled "A Few Thoughts for a Young Man," first delivered in 1849, had, early in its life, a sale of twenty thousand copies, and has been republished repeatedly, two separate editions appearing as late as the present year.

<sup>2</sup> A volume, comprising twenty-one pamphlets, and containing 1573 pages, arranged by Horace Mann's own hand, and bound together, with the title "Common School Controversy," was loaned by his widow during her lifetime, and never recovered. It remains the property of Mr. Mann's heirs, and should be returned to them by its present possessor. It is desired that it should find a final resting-place in the Massachusetts State Library, or in the Public Library of Boston.

## EDITOR'S PREFACE

### TO THE ORIGINAL EDITION.

---

IN preparing the present volumes of Mr. Mann's works for republication, I have gone back to his very first expositions of the deficiencies in the administration of our common-school system, not only because it is a matter of historical interest to note the commencements of the reform in which he was so actively engaged for twelve years, but because, on looking into the present condition of the schools, even in Massachusetts, in towns not twenty miles from Boston, the same defects may be observed in many cases, and in many respects, which at first attracted his attention.

Schoolhouses, as well as churches, are still erected without the proper means of ventilation; seats are still arranged without reference to the eye-sight of the children; examinations of school-teachers, by School Committees, are still very imperfectly conducted, thus entailing upon schools teachers who are deficient either in knowledge, or in the power of governing upon right principles; and no amount of knowledge in a teacher is of much avail where a deficiency in this power exists. In reading over Mr. Mann's exhortations upon



these points, one is amazed to find how little headway has been made; for these evils are still existent in schools; and we would commend these Lectures and Reports to every citizen who may be eligible to selection as a School-Committee-man.

In re-organizing the Southern portion of our country, they will prove invaluable guides. And the government of still another country, sister Republics on the other side of the equator, are subscribing largely for these works of Mr. Mann, by whose help they hope to give vitality and efficiency to the common-school system, which they have already adopted on the model of our own.

It is not denied that common-school education, public, democratic school education, is held in very different and much higher estimation than at the time when the Massachusetts Board of Education and the Normal Schools were inaugurated; but few persons who are intimately acquainted with the subject will deny that the tone of the schools is still far below what our advanced condition of prosperity and science demands. A suggestion of reform in Harvard University has of late been made by one of the most distinguished and thoughtful of its sons, one who will not be accused of any visionary schemes, but who is so far conservative as to be eminently just all round. He admits the necessity, when Harvard shall be changed from a High School to a University, of an extended course of instruction in schools; where the

studies are now, taking schools on an average, so limited in their scope, that they do not answer the purpose of a preparatory school for the colleges, so that private instruction is much sought for this end. When the principle of the "Kindergarten" shall be fully adopted in the primary schools, so that children may be put in possession of all their faculties, besides being taught to read, to write, and to count (which is now all that is truly effected in primary schools, unless individual teachers happen to have a natural vocation for their office, and instinctively supply craving little souls with some of the nourishment adapted to their susceptible age), and when the finest minds and the highest training and preparation shall be considered indispensable for teachers of schools of every grade, and are commanded by proper rates of compensation, our educational measures may be said to have taken a second step. It may still be said here, as has been said of late in South America by a distinguished educationist, that more appropriations are made for railroads than for education. It is true that railroads and schools help one another forward. When railroads penetrate every great section of this immense country, other things follow in regular order; but statistics will show that education does not take the lead yet, as it ought to do. The laying of railroads seems to create population, not merely to set it in motion. The next thing to be done, surely, is to train this

increased population in the way it should go. The present anomalous condition of our country enforces this argument. We are still in danger of being led by might rather than right, and there is no remedy for this but in the increased intelligence of the people.

It is interesting to see that the colored people, whose distinguishing trait at the present time seems to be their desire for knowledge, are taking the schools into their hands in regions where they predominate in numbers over the white population. They are forming School Committees among themselves, and colored teachers are pressing forward more and more to take the places of the white ones who have so eagerly taken up the cause of their neglected education. The force with which the emancipated slaves, and even the free colored population of the South, have been deprived of education, is undoubtedly the main-spring of that wonderful rebound, which has never known a parallel in the world's history,—the rebound of a wholly oppressed and degraded people to free themselves suddenly from the trammels of ignorance. They feel, instinctively, that knowledge is power; and that instinct must serve them until the pleasures of knowledge, for its own sake, can take the place of it. It is devoutly to be hoped, that they may have such furtherance from others as will insure their being enabled to taste these pleasures; because that

result alone will carry them through the hard paths they are destined to travel in pursuit of the object which they so ardently desire, — an equality of social condition with the whites. No accumulation of worldly riches, nothing but education, can ever give it to them. And there is no doubt that every obstacle will be thrown in their way, for generations to come, to bar their entrance into that heaven. Their unsurpassed vitality, their unfathomable faith, are needed, to sustain them under the trial; but these give fair promise of answering to the demand. That these volumes may help them to wise methods, is the sincere wish of the Editor; and their author would feel no less earnestly the desire of contributing something to a cause for which he labored so intently and self-forgetingly.

MARY MANN.

1866.



## CONTENTS.

---

	PAGE.
PROSPECTUS OF THE COMMON-SCHOOL JOURNAL . . .	1
AUTHOR'S PREFACE TO "LECTURES ON EDUCATION" . .	33

### LECTURE I.

MEANS AND OBJECTS OF COMMON-SCHOOL EDUCATION .	39
--	----

### LECTURE II.

SPECIAL PREPARATION A PREREQUISITE TO TEACHING .	89
--	----

### LECTURE III.

THE NECESSITY OF EDUCATION IN A REPUBLICAN GOV- ERNMENT . . . . .	143
--	-----

### LECTURE IV.

WHAT GOD DOES, AND WHAT HE LEAVES FOR MAN TO DO, IN THE WORK OF EDUCATION . . . . .	191
--	-----

### LECTURE V.

AN HISTORICAL VIEW OF EDUCATION; SHOWING ITS DIG- NITY AND ITS DEGRADATION . . . . .	241
---	-----

### LECTURE VI.

ON DISTRICT-SCHOOL LIBRARIES . . . . .	297
--	-----

### LECTURE VII.

ON SCHOOL PUNISHMENTS . . . . .	338
---------------------------------	-----

	PAGE
FIRST ANNUAL REPORT OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION .	371
FIRST REPORT OF THE SECRETARY, FOR 1837 . . .	384
<p>Schoolhouses (see Supplementary Report, 433). The manner in which school committees perform their duties, 390. Apathy of the people towards the schools, 408. Competency of teachers, 419.</p>	
SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT ON SCHOOLHOUSES . . .	433
<p>Ventilation and warming, 436; desks, seats, etc., 454; location, 465; light, windows, 471; yards or play-grounds, 473; duties of instructors in relation to, 476.</p>	
SECOND REPORT, FOR 1838 . . . . .	493
<p>Progress in Nantucket and elsewhere, 495. Methods of instruction in spelling and reading, 506; teaching words before letters, 519; spelling, 528; faulty character of reading books, 530; spellers and definers, 548; dictionaries, 550; suitable books necessary, 552; compositions and translations, 555; consequences of imperfect methods, 556.</p>	
APPENDIX . . . . .	563

# PROSPECTUS

OF THE

## COMMON-SCHOOL JOURNAL.

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WE avail ourselves of this opportunity to set forth, at some length, the considerations which have induced us to incur the labor and the responsibility of preparing such a work, and to present an outline of the views which it will be our endeavor hereafter to fill up.

The title we have chosen will turn the mind of every reader to that ancient and cherished institution, the Common Schools of Massachusetts. It will naturally suggest such questions as these: What rank are common schools entitled to hold in our private and legislative regards? After an experiment of almost two hundred years, what is the verdict rendered by Time on their utility and necessity? Is the homage we are wont to pay them traditionary merely, or is it founded upon an intelligent conviction and an actual realization of their benefits? Have they scattered good among past generations, and have they averted evil? Go back to the earliest days of the colony,—to the year 1647, when they had their origin,—when almost the whole of the present territory of this State was wilderness; strike out of existence this single element—the provision made



for the education of the whole people — and would our recorded history be different from what it is? Would it have been illuminated or darkened by the change? Without the schools, should we have had the great men in the councils and in the fields of the Revolution? or, which is substantially the same question, should we have had the mothers of those men? Should we have had the sages who formed our own state Constitution, and assisted in that more arduous work, the formation of the Constitution of the United States? Without the schools, should we have had the industrious yeomanry, exhibiting so generally within our limits the cheering signs of comfort, competence, and respectability; or that race of artisans and inventors who have made partnership with the inexhaustible powers of the material world, and won their resistless forces to labor for human amelioration? Without the schools, would the same qualities of intelligence and virtue have signalized the hundreds of thousands who, from the distant regions of the West and South, turn their eyes hitherward to their ancestral home? Would our enterprise equally have circuited the globe, and brought back whatever products belong to a milder climate or a richer soil? Without this simple and humble institution, would no change have come over our character abroad, our social privileges at home, over the laws which sustain, the charities which bless, the morals which preserve, the religion which sanctifies?

Set down the true constituents of a people's greatness and happiness, and compare Massachusetts with those states where one may travel from border to border without ever seeing a schoolhouse; compare nations, otherwise similarly circumstanced, in one of which common schools have been maintained, in the other unknown — Scotland with England or Ireland, Holland with Spain

or Portugal, and say whether the contrast can be but partially and inadequately explained, on any known principles of human nature, if the system of Public Instruction be left out of the comparison. Indeed, the only consideration of weight to prove the inefficiency of our public schools to elevate and dignify the people who sustain them, is the indifference and neglect into which they have fallen amongst ourselves: and yet they have not wholly fallen into forgetfulness in a community which rouses itself to reclaim them.

It may, indeed, be said, that it was freedom of thought, constituting, as it did, the main element of Protestantism, which has given superiority to the communities where common schools have flourished. But if Protestantism, from which systems of public instruction emanated, has always tended towards free institutions, yet could Protestantism itself have survived without the alliance of a system of public instruction? If the mother watched over the child, protected it at seasons when it would otherwise have perished, and nursed it into manly vigor, has not the child, with filial piety, requited the boon, by vindicating the cause, and even preserving the existence, of the mother?

That the general interest once felt in regard to our common schools has subsided to an alarming degree of indifference, is a position not likely to be questioned by any one who has compared their earlier with their later history. This is not to be attributed to any single cause, but to the co-operation of many. First, perhaps, in the series, came the life-struggle of the Revolution. Education is principally concerned with the future. Its eye is fixed on a remote object, whose magnitude only makes it visible in the distance; for it is with our moral as with our natural vision, the dimensions of the vast are reduced

by remoteness to the size of the minute in proximity ; as in the case of the astronomer, who, while looking at the sun, saw an animal of huge limbs and immense bulk rushing up on one side, and soon overshadowing and darkening its whole surface, which proved to be only a fly crossing the upper lens of his telescope. The revolutionary struggle was one for self-preservation, and, of course, it condensed the future into the immediate and the present. After that epoch passed, the fiscal condition of the country, the momentous questions connected with the organization of a new government, without model or precedent in the history of mankind, and, at a later period, the agitations of party, have engrossed the time and enlisted the talents of men most interested in elevating the character of the people, and most competent to do it. It cannot be denied, too, that for years past the public eye has been pointed backwards to the achievements of our ancestors, rather than forward to the condition of our posterity ; as though the praise of dead fathers would provide adequately for living children. The public voice, the public press, and the public mind have been prolific of that doubtful virtue, which substitutes empty commendations of what is good for earnest efforts to procure it.

After the more important institutions of the country had been settled, and an abundant accumulation of the means of subsistence had bestowed leisure, it would naturally happen that a portion of public talent and resources would be set at liberty, and left to choose new spheres of action and new objects of bounty. But here arose those various philanthropic enterprises, whose objects lie beyond the limits of our own territory. Had it not been for their claims to precedence, it may be presumed that no inconsiderable portion of that self-sacrifi-

cing spirit and that copious stream of wealth, so bountifully expended upon other causes, would have found a congenial sphere of activity in cultivating the moral and intellectual wastes within our own borders. We have lately heard many of the men, who have been foremost in these works, speak of their past conduct, in language which said, "These things ought we to have done, but not to have left the others undone." And even those munificent contributions in aid of different departments of learning, made amongst ourselves, and to be expended amongst ourselves, have been confined, with one recent and praiseworthy exception, to the higher literary institutions of the country. Though their beams have been vivifying and nourishing, yet they have been shed rather on the solitariness of the summits of society than through the populousness of its valleys.

Passing by many causes which have conduced to the same end, we shall mention but one more. In no other country was ever such a bounty offered upon industry and practical talent as in ours. Skill, sagacity, the results of intellectual application, have won a large portion of the prizes of fame and of opulence. It has been as though an officer had been sent to every house, to seek out and to *impress* whatever could be made available for outward and material prosperity. Hence wealth, possessions, whatever makes up the external part — the *body*, if we may so speak — of human welfare, have advanced with unparalleled success; while a general amelioration of habits, and those purer pleasures which flow from a cultivation of the higher sentiments, which constitute the *spirit* of human welfare, and enhance a thousand-fold the worth of all temporal possessions, — these have been comparatively neglected. Perhaps it is in the order of nature that a people, like an individual, shall

first provide for its lower and animal wants,—its food, its raiment, its shelter,—but the demands of this part of our nature should be watchfully guarded, lest in the acquisition of sensual and material gratifications we lose sight of the line which separates competence and comfort from superfluity and extravagance, and thus forget and forfeit our nobler capacities for more rational enjoyments.

From an inherent cause, different opinions will always be entertained of the value of education by different men. Those who think most correctly upon the subject will still think differently; and this difference will be measured by the difference in their respective powers of comprehension and forethought. Being infinite in importance, the only question can be, Who approximates nearest in his computation of its worth? Its value will be rated by each just as highly as he can think.

The necessity of education, who can doubt? The average length of human life is supposed to be between thirty and forty years. How many efforts are to be put forth, how many and various relations to be filled, how many duties to be performed, within that brief period of time! How ignorant of all these efforts, relations and duties are the early years of infancy! The human being is less endowed with instincts for his guidance than the lower orders of animated creation. Consider then his condition when first ushered into life. He is encompassed by a universe of relations, each one of which will prove a blessing or a curse, just according to the position which he may sustain towards it, and yet in regard to all these relations it is to him a universe of darkness. All his faculties and powers are susceptible of a right direction and control, and, if obedient to them, blessings innumerable and inexhaustible will be lavished upon him

But all his powers and faculties are also liable to a wrong direction and control; and, obedient to them, he becomes a living wound, and the universe of encompassing relations presses upon him only to torture him. And yet into this universe of opportunities for happiness on the one hand, and of dangers and temptations on the other, he is brought, without any knowledge whither he should go or what he should do, — by what means he shall secure happiness or avert misery. To leave such a being physically alone, that is, to refuse to provide nourishment, raiment, protection against the seasons and the elements, would be to insure his destruction. But such abandonment would be mercy, compared with leaving him alone intellectually and morally. Nor is it guidance merely that he needs; for his guides will be soon removed in the course of nature, when he will be left with the dreadful heritage only of an enlarged consciousness of wants with equal inability to supply them — with capabilities of suffering immensely multiplied and magnified, without knowledge of antidote or remedy. Before, then, his natural protectors and guardians and teachers are removed, they will leave their work undone if he have not been prepared to protect and guide and teach himself. Nay, if the generation that is, do not raise above their own level the generation that is to be, the race must remain stationary, and the sublime law of human progression be defeated.

But passing by these general considerations, we will select a few specific topics, in order to demonstrate that a proper education of the rising generation is the highest earthly duty of the risen.

That intelligence and virtue are the only support and stability of free institutions, was a truism a long time ago. If free institutions have any other security, we

should be glad to know what it is. This great truth, however, like many others, has received the readiest assent of the reason, without producing that effect upon the feelings which gives birth to action. It has been admitted and forgotten. We act like those debtors who seem to think that an acknowledgment of the existence of their indebtedness supersedes or postpones the obligation of payment. But such a truth as this ought to be wrought into the minds of the whole people, so that it will remain there, not dormant as a mere conclusion of the reason, but impulsive as an instinct of self-preservation. Nor is it the intelligence of a few, which will supply the indispensable condition of freedom, but that of the many; nor a theoretic intelligence either, but a working intelligence. Nor, again, will it suffice to have men who preach virtue or sing it; but we must have men who produce it themselves and know how to cultivate its germs in others. It is not enough to have men who call themselves Christians; but Christians must re-examine and verify the text, and learn whether their great Master went about *doing* good or *talking* good merely.

Who, let us ask, are to control that legislation of the state and country, which has been well compared to the atmosphere, which surrounds us wherever we may be or whithersoever we may go? In relation to the law, no man is ever alone. There is no earthly interest of any man, which the law, either in its enactment or its administration, cannot reach. It may alter our relation to our property, if we have any, or to all the means of acquiring it, if we have none. It may take away our reputation, or surround us with a community where to be worthy of a good reputation would be a legal disability, and work a forfeiture of social privileges. The first act of the law is to prohibit every man from redressing his own wrongs.

Hence, by its perverted or even mistaken judgments, it may inflict wounds upon an injured man, even deeper than those it ought to heal. If the law fails to supply the remedy which it forbids the individual to pursue for himself, it leaves him, in that respect, one degree worse than he would be in a state of utter barbarism. It ties his hands, which in a state of nature would be free, and then permits another to wrong him with impunity. So, too, the laws of a people not only add to or subtract from the value of life, by extending their control over those things which constitute so much of its welfare, but in the case of national hostilities they take life itself without stint or remuneration.

Now look at the agency and the agents, — the commission to be executed and those who are to execute it. The agency is the government of the state and country, embracing in its comprehensive sway most of the greater and all the lesser interests of life ; extending far into the future, as well as controlling the present. In the State of Massachusetts, the agents are any citizen who shall have resided within its limits one year, within the town six months, and shall have paid so much as a poll-tax, provided one has been assessed upon him. And these agents have power to act, wholly independent of instructions and exempt from accountability. In the language of the law, they have a power of attorney, *irrevocable*, to dispose, according to their own good pleasure, of the dearest and most momentous interests of society. Now what man in the community, in the selection of an agent or trustee to administer his private affairs, governs his choice by such a list of qualifications? Is an overseer in a manufactory, a cashier of a bank, a clerk in a counting-house, a foreman in a mechanic's shop, a market-man who carries the produce of the farmer to market, chosen



without reference to any higher standard of conduct or character than that he has paid a poll-tax within two years? And yet no one of these interests is comparable, in importance, to many of those of which the voter disposes at the ballot-box. In all other cases, we look for fitness and qualification—a combination of properties, adapted to the trust to be reposed or the work to be done. A voter is a public man; he is a member of the government; he officiates, indirectly, in the three departments, judicial, legislative, executive. Surely, such a member of the administration ought to be intelligent, upright, conscientious, impartial, firm; and yet his possession of all these qualities and virtues is inferred, by political argumentation, from a certificate of a brief period of domicile and the payment of a few shillings! What consequences will impend over society, and will assuredly befall it too, if, at the great council of the ballot-box, we see men, who but yesterday arrived at majority, who know nothing of the principles and structure of the government under which they live, of the functions of its officers, or the qualifications indispensable for discharging them;—if we see there men, who, for half a century, have labored to draw society backwards towards barbarism; or, what is even worse than barbarism, to prostitute civilized intelligence to gratify savage desires;—if we see there men, lately emerged from confinement in prison, where they were doomed for some outrage on the rights of the community, which, however violative of those rights it may have been, may not be half so baneful as the measures they are now favoring? Nor has any man a right to put such questions as these to those disposers of his welfare, perhaps of himself,—“What knowest thou of government; of the deep principles upon which it rests; of the forethought

and wisdom its policy requires ; of the equity and fidelity its administration demands ? What carest thou for the honesty of the man whose name is borne upon thy vote ? Art thou for making him ruler over many cities, because he has been false to every obligation in ruling over a few ? ” Such questions are out of place ; they are impertinent, in that forum over whose portals the great law of POLITICAL EQUALITY is written. At that gate, all characteristics but one drop off. No longer is there remembered either the virtues of the good or the wisdom of the wise, the folly of the fool or the guilt of the criminal. The judges of our courts, who merely expound the laws, are commissioned to hold their offices *during good behavior* ; but no such limitation is attached to the right of voters, though they virtually enact the laws and appoint the judges who administer them. In a judicial investigation between one individual and another, a witness may be impeached and rejected for legal infamy or personal interest. He is not allowed to taint with his corruption the pure stream of justice. Either of a long catalogue of villanies works disqualification. But the elective franchise is not forfeited by any magnitude of interest or atrocity of character. Now as there is a wisdom, prudence, probity, upon which individual prosperity depends, so upon the same qualities does the prosperity of a government depend. Folly, selfishness, and iniquity will be as fatal to the latter as to the former. They will ruin a nation as certainly as they will ruin a man. How long, then, could free institutions subsist, under administrators either weak or wicked ? How long under weakness and wickedness combined ?

This topic is so momentous, and, as we fear, so superficially considered, that we cannot forbear to present it under another form of elucidation. It is yet to be de-

veloped how close a partnership is a republican government with the right of universal suffrage. It is yet to be manifested, that each citizen, by virtue of this social partnership, contributes, as his part of the common capital, his hopes for the future, his subsistence for the present, his reputation, his life. By virtue of this compact, the other members of the firm have power to dispose of the investments, according to their own views and motives, be they of policy or plunder. Not entire, however, is the analogy between a business partnership between merchants and this political association. From the former a man can withdraw, when he finds that the mismanagement of his associates is overwhelming his interests with ruin and his character with disgrace. Retiring, he may withdraw whatever remains of his unsquandered fortune. But not so in this political partnership. Though in this each has a more enlarged power of binding the whole, yet none can strike his name from the company and thereby evade the imposition of new responsibilities. The only legalized modes of dissolving the connection are death or self-banishment. Would it not be good policy for the members of such a firm to expend a little, both of their time and their revenue, to qualify *all* of those future members, whose admission they cannot prevent?

Shortlived, indeed, would be the fame of our ancestors, if they had established such a frame of government without providing some extensive guaranty that it should escape the misrule of ignorance and licentiousness. Otherwise, to have put loaded fire-arms into the hands of children would have been wisdom in comparison.

Do we then mourn over that political condition of contingent peril, into which we have been thrown by the great events of the past? No! but we rejoice with un-

speakable joy. The old cycle of years is filled; a new era dawns upon the world. In our day, the very conditions of social existence are reversed. Heretofore, the rulers of the earth have enjoyed their wealth and their power; they have rioted in splendid palaces, or played the terrible games of war, because the multitude were robbed not only of their rights, but of all the means of reclaiming them. Political oppression chained the bodies of men; religious, their souls. Look backwards through the historic vista, and how scantily peopled has the earth been with beings blessed with any knowledge of human duties or any enjoyment of human rights. Rulers, by hereditary descent or by conquest, a few commanders of navies or of armies, — some hundred men in a nation of millions — are all who emerge into the upper day of history, from that darkness which shrouds the countless myriads of our race. Sometimes a poet in singing the praises of his chief, or a historian in enumerating the elements of a tyrant's power, has noticed the number of his subject millions; yet with as little recognition of their common nature, as little sympathy for their condition, as is felt by a curious traveller, who computes the number of insects that swarm in a given space on the banks of the Nile or the Ganges. The beings who bore the moral lineaments and image of God, would have been mainly forgotten, except for those brief statistics which number the slaughtered thousands of the battle-field. And in all this, for those times, there was a certain fitness and propriety. Prerogative, dominion, could not otherwise exist. Sight and knowledge on one side, blindness and ignorance on the other, were the circumstances that made equals unequal. Now social positions are changed. They who were beneath, are above. They who obeyed, rule. And hence, those who have more of

worldly possessions in their hands ; who, from higher enlightenment and a more extensive forecast, in regard to their children, have a longer reach of the future in their eye, must seek for help, not in the ignorance and abasement, but in the intelligence and elevation of the multitude. What would once have been their ruin, is now their only salvation ; for that multitude is safe in the power it wields. No monarch surrounded by his guards, no nobleman with his lengthened retinue, no knight in his harness of mail, was ever half so secure in his supremacy, as the humblest voter is with us of making his will known and felt through all the ranks of society. Hence do we rejoice, that in the providence of God a new series of events has been unfolded, which will compel the basest instincts of selfishness to co-operate with the highest sentiments of duty in ameliorating the condition of mankind, through an enlargement of their understandings and a purification of their affections. If the multitude, who have the power, are not fitted to exercise it, society will be like the herding together of wolves. The only safety, then, is in the concomitance of qualifications and power.

All our readers must have seen or heard of those strolling companies of tumblers, rope-dancers or balance-masters, who, among other feats, build *human pyramids*. Four stand side by side in a row ; three more mount up and stand upon their shoulders ; two others overclimb these and make a third tier ; another ascends aloft, some twenty feet, and, poising himself on the topmost shoulders, makes the apex of the pyramid. This represents the structure of despotic governments exactly. While those above can put out the eyes of those below whenever they look upward, and can beat them (with a long pole, commonly called a sceptre) into due subjection.

things go on very well. But when those below discover how the great and equal law of gravitation bears upon the upper strata, and begin to execute certain well-concerted jostlings, adapted to topple down their highnesses, then, from having the farthest to fall, they find themselves to be the most exposed part of society ; and if not utterly bereft of reason, they will pray Heaven above and their underlings below to let them get down as safely and as fast as they can. Descended to a common platform, they find their own best welfare dependent upon the common good ; and that, if they would attain superiority, it must be that noble superiority, which arises from higher character and more beneficent conduct. This is the condition of our society, and this the law by which the individual welfare of its members is governed.

The love and the admiration of knowledge are instinctive in the human mind. Savages tremble before those who are supposed to be acquainted with the secret workings of nature. Divine honors are won amongst them by superior knowledge. And with civilized nations in modern times, the veneration for talent and genius has risen to such a height, that, by common consent, discoveries in science and achievements in literature have been regarded as a surer test of advancement, as conferring higher honor, than exploits in arms or progress in the useful arts. But still the object and the rivalry have been to enlarge the boundaries of science, and, if we may so speak, to pile up knowledge, mass upon mass, to such a height, that its bright summits might be visible in distant lands. There has been no ambition, no competition, *to spread it amongst the people*. To produce one man, unmatched elsewhere in his department of learning, has been the title to fame amongst emulous nations. To exhibit one man who could read twenty foreign languages,

has been deemed better than to exhibit tens of thousands who could read understandingly the elevating truths contained in their own. One prodigy of genius in an age has answered the demands of humanity upon an empire shrouded in ignorance. What a chorus for the triumph of intellect was sung, by the most civilized and learned nation in the old world, when one of its astronomers discovered a planet in the distant regions of space, though millions of its people were then suffering under debasing superstitions, derived from heathen astrology. In 1751, the *New Style* was substituted for the *Old*, by the British Parliament. The scientific labors necessary for the change were principally performed by the Earl of Macclesfield and the learned astronomer Dr. Bradley. Great pains were taken beforehand to prepare the public mind for its introduction; but so great was the ignorance and superstition of the people, that, three years afterwards, when a son of Lord Macclesfield was a candidate for the House of Commons, the mob pursued him, crying, "Give us back the eleven days we have been robbed of;" — and even several years afterwards, when Dr. Bradley, worn down by his labors in the cause of science, was sinking under the disease which at last ended his days, the people attributed his sufferings to a judgment from heaven, for having been engaged in so impious an undertaking. They probably thought their lives had been shortened by a change in the almanac. As a consequence of this view, that an enlargement of knowledge amongst a few was every thing, and the multiplication of the number of minds capable of comprehending and enjoying it was nothing, its stores have been gathered into universities and learned halls; and an amount of time and of labor has been uselessly spent in cloistered cells, sufficient to have breathed moral life and intellectual ac-

tivity into millions of minds. While over wide tracts of British territory, persons who could read and write were scarcely to be found, the funds of government were employed to collect libraries so extensive that no mortal could accomplish the perusal of their books, except his life were prolonged to such seniority as would displace Methuselah from his rank in the catechism. In the year 1826, the present Lord Brougham, in a pamphlet upon Education, undertook to demonstrate, for the benefit of his fellow-countrymen, that a penny a week, saved from the earnings of a whole family, *for one year*, would enable them to purchase *one* book for their instruction in some of the commonest duties of life. But that great government, instead of supplying such a want, has spent tens of thousands of pounds in hunting, amidst icebergs and polar bears, for a North-west passage, difficult to find, and worthless when discovered.

Far different is the grateful path, where we are summoned to a glorious duty. Not to enter every dwelling and seize its resources, in order to swell the redundancy of some treasure-house of knowledge; not to collect the rills, whose waters might fertilize the whole land, and gather them into a stagnant reservoir:—this is not our work; but multiplication, diffusion, ever-replenishing, until the people shall learn the nature of the true duties and enjoyments of freemen. Let not the quest for new discoveries cease; let philosopher after philosopher reveal more and more of the wonderful works of nature, and thus present to all men new reasons for adoration of the Creator. We would not call back any one who is exploring the skies or diving into the earth for knowledge; but first of all, we would diffuse the great moral, social, and economical truths, already discovered, amongst the people. What is practically valuable among the



accumulations of past centuries, we would reproduce, and make it, as far as possible, the fireside companion of every citizen; so that if an inventory could be taken of the virtue and intelligence of the people, the units would swell to an aggregate, incomputable by the highest standards of former times.

But shall we aim to make every man a philosopher? If by this is meant that highest reach of philosophy, which consists in an understanding of one's duty and destination, and a disposition to perform the one and live up to the other, we answer, *yes*; but not that every man shall be linguist, rhetorician, or astronomer, any more than we would that every man should be tailor, blacksmith, and watchmaker. Let us not, however, overlook one of the most striking facts in the ordination of providence, that the truths, which it required the greatest philosophers, toiling for years, perhaps for lives, to discover, can be made perfectly intelligible to ordinary minds in weeks, or even days. It took the race more than fifty-five centuries to discover and establish the true solar system; and yet the space of fifty-five hours would suffice to give to an intelligent man such an idea of its stupendous movements and beautiful harmony, that with his whole mind and heart he would exclaim, "An undevout astronomer is mad!"

One of the most important of all the consequences which have yet resulted from a recognition of the existence of individual man as a being of rights and duties, has been the inquiry, what are his attributes; what relation does he bear to other parts of the universe; that is, what special adaptation and fitness is there in his constitution to the material world, to filial, fraternal, conjugal, parental relations, to society, to his Maker; how far can any one of these tendencies be carried without en-

croaching upon the rightful province of others ; and what are the specific consequences of the undue indulgence or neglect of any one of them ? From this examination, a beam of light has been thrown directly upon the subject of education. Among the ancients, physical strength was in great demand. The wars they were forever waging required corporeal vigor, a power of bodily endurance, and that thoughtless bravery which springs from the animal nature, rather than from the moral attributes. Hence the invigoration of the body was their paramount object ; and civic games, national rewards, and honors, all tended to rear a race of vigorous animals rather than of exalted men. Except at some Augustan epoch, the greatness which was admired and emulated was that of the body and not of the soul. The word which the Romans used to express "virtue" was that which originally signified "valor." Hercules was deified because of the strong muscles in his arms and legs, and the Israelites proclaimed Saul their king, by acclamation, because he was taller by a head and neck than any other of the people. The opposite extreme has prevailed in modern times. Our mark has been to cultivate the powers of the mind, forgetful of the body — as though we were disembodied spirits already ; — and among the mental powers, to develop and invigorate the intellect, rather than to regulate those appetites and affections upon which so vast a proportion of all individual and social welfare rests. Each system is partially right ; each is mainly wrong. Each has an element of truth in it, upon which its advocates could stand, to defend the attendant errors. In the education of a human being, all his powers are to be regarded. When the perfection of a work depends upon the proportion and harmony of its parts, the absence of any part defeats the whole ; and

this is a reason why the most civilized people have fallen so immeasurably below an attainable point of elevation. One of the greatest contributions of science to the world is the clearness, the distinctness, with which the details of the idea have been brought out, and made, as it were, visible and tangible, that man is a being, not created for one duty, one enjoyment, one relation only, but for many duties, many enjoyments, and many relations; that he is endowed by his Maker with distinct original capacities and powers, by which he is fitted for the manifold purposes of his being; that these capacities and powers are neither equal in authority, nor is their gratification attended with equal quantities of enjoyment, but that they rise in authority and in their power of bestowing pleasure, according to a graduated scale, from those animal gratifications which we hold in common with the brutes, to the sublime emotions, by which we may become kindred to perfected spirits. They rise, like the ladder seen in the vision of the patriarch, which, resting on earth, reached heaven. The first feeling of an infant after birth ought to be and is an impulse of the instinct for food, while the last thought of a dying man should be that of a life well spent and an anticipation of a better existence. How near to each other are these extremes in point of time; how infinitely remote in character! To prepare the human beings who are coming into this world, as far as human means can do it, to pass from one of these points to the other, is the work of Education.

Whatever of this noble work is within the compass of human powers, is to be accomplished through an investigation of principles, and a skilful application of them to practice, even in their minutest details, however apparently trivial and insignificant. The type and paper had first to be mechanically prepared, whereby even the Gospels have come to us.

Our limits permit only a brief reference to the classes of means by which the objects of education are attainable. In treating of education, in modern times, it has become as customary to classify its departments under the three heads of Physical, Intellectual, and Moral or Religious, as it is in geographical treatises to consider the earth under the natural divisions of continents, oceans, islands, &c. We shall offer a few remarks under each of these heads.

When physical education is mentioned, that is a knowledge of the laws by which health and strength are attained and preserved, many people start and ask in surprise whether every man is to be a physician. The answer to this is easy. Physicians must understand the laws and symptoms of the diseased body. It is enough for common men to understand the laws and functions of the healthy body. The conditions of health are few, simple, intelligible. The action of disease is intricate and infinite. Anybody is competent to a knowledge of the former. After so many lives of study and experience, the latter is still an imperfect science. That knowledge respecting air, exercise, dress, and diet, which is requisite for the preservation of health, may be acquired with a far less amount of attention and expense, than are commonly necessary in a three-months' sickness; while a physician has to learn the endless catalogue of diseases and the infinite varieties of pain, together with the properties and applications of a catalogue of supposed remedies equally endless.

The body is not only the instrument through which the mind operates, but it is the first and only one through which the mind can act upon any other instrument, provided for it by science or art. Hence the highest powers of mind, with the most perfect external instruments all

around it, and the noblest sphere of action before it, may be baffled through the defects of that intermediate instrument the body. From an ignorant violation of the simple laws of health, how many young men sicken and die, after having incurred the expense and volunteered the labor necessary to qualify them for usefulness and honor ; like frail barks, sinking in the ocean at the first approach of the storm, and carrying down the costly freight with which they were laden ! Who that has reached middle life has not seen many of the friends who started with him under the happiest auguries of success, broken down in their career ; — not falling nobly in the race, but ignobly perishing by the wayside and far from the goal of duty ? Mental power is so dependent for its manifestation on physical power, that we deem it not extravagant to say, that if, amongst those who lead sedentary lives, physical power could be doubled, their mental power would be doubled also. The health and constitutional vigor of a people is a blessing not to be lost — certainly not to be regained — in a day. Not only do bodily fragility and incapacity of endurance diminish the available powers of the intellect, but the perpetual presence of pain, the depressing sensations of diseases, not acute, tend to impair the efficient impulses of virtue and to undermine the foundations of moral character. Gradually and imperceptibly a race may physically deteriorate, until their bodies shall degenerate into places, which, without being wholly untenable, are still wholly unfit to keep a soul in.

A proper intellectual education begins with a cultivation of the senses. Everybody knows the vast difference which exists between different men, in the quickness with which they catch the qualities of things, and the fidelity with which they are able to recall their impres-

sions. The exquisite sense of touch acquired by the blind, of sight acquired by the deaf and dumb, shows at once what those senses are capable of accomplishing, and how far the mass of the community fall short of what they might acquire. The ideas excited in the mind by means of the senses constitute at least the main portion of the elements of subsequent reasoning. If we may use an artisan's comparison, the senses bring a large part of the rough stock or raw material into the mind, afterwards to be worked up by the reason into solid and useful productions. And as no skill of the workman, though it rise to infinite, can make a durable and perfect fabric from worthless substances, so the noblest intellect ever created will produce only erroneous results, if acting upon a store of false perceptions.

In a volume of the Historical Collections, there is preserved a map of what now constitutes the territory of Maine and Massachusetts, which was published by Capt. John Smith, in London, in 1614, under the express authority of Prince Charles. In that map Boston is placed about twenty leagues *north* of Charles River, Salem about twelve leagues *south* of Boston, and Cambridge more than thirty leagues north of Salem. The map represents the distance between Boston and Plymouth to be about *ninety* miles. Now suppose any one were to confide in the correctness of that map, and go twelve leagues *south* of Boston to find Salem, or thirty leagues *north* of Salem to visit Cambridge. Yet the mischief caused by getting such erroneous ideas into the mind, is no adequate representation of the mischief, and often ruin, of acquiring wrong notions on a thousand subjects of practical business or social duty.

The next office of the intellect is to observe the *relations* which exist between objects, and how they may be

made subservient to human welfare. Innumerable as are the individual objects around us, the relations between them and our personal relations to them are indefinitely more numerous. Hence it is that not a waking hour passes, during the whole course of our lives, which does not require an observation of the things around us, and an exercise of judgment, either in adjusting them to our condition, or our condition to theirs. Let us illustrate this by a supposition. The architect sits musing in his office. He is arranging in his mind the ideas of all the different parts of a perfect edifice, and, one after another, they rise and take their proper places in his imagination, until the mental archetype stands forth in fair proportions from the foundation to the cope-stone. Then a thousand instruments, and hands and limbs, which are but instruments, are put in motion; the stone comes from the quarry, the wood from the forest, the iron from the earth; the soft clay becomes solid in the bricks, and the solid limestone soft for the mortar; the sand is turned into glass; a change is wrought in the form and place of many thousand things; and in a few months, that image, which the musing architect had in his mind, has taken body and form, and has become the admiration of every beholder and a home for many generations. Yet in all the countless operations of the work, each one of which demanded the constant aid of the perceptive and judging powers, not a single mistake could have been committed without retarding the completion or impairing the perfections of the structure. And so in all the businesses of life, — in agriculture, arts, commerce, government; in all the sacredness of domestic and social relations; in fine, wherever we touch any part of the material or spiritual universe, — the possession and the exercise of a sound intellect are necessary, or mis-

take, discomfiture, ruin, misery, will thwart and frustrate our plans. Who can think, without anxiety, of committing interests, infinite in number and immeasurable in importance, to a generation with perverted or uncultivated intellects?

But the highest function of the intellect is that of discovering the Laws which the Creator has impressed upon every work of his hands. A superficial survey of the operations of nature and events of life might lead one to infer that they are unregulated,—the production of chance,—thrown out promiscuously, without regard to order or system,—instead of being certain results of immutable principles. On the contrary, one of the most striking manifestations of divine wisdom seems to be, that each part of the creation is endued with a definite nature, has its appropriate properties and uses, and is made subject to such invariable laws, that the same circumstances will always produce the same results, and different circumstances different results. These laws, so far as discovered, constitute the body of human science; so far as undiscovered, a noble field for intellectual labor. They are one great element in the superiority of civilized man. We know the laws by which the pathless ocean can be traversed, so that a navigator will leave one of our ports, and strike the narrowest inlet on the other side of the globe. We know thousands of those laws by which the earth yields her increase, and by which her varied productions are changed into innumerable forms, to subserve the comfort and happiness of man. We are forever encompassed by these laws,—equally in the most trivial and the most momentous concerns of life. We never take a step, or breathe a breath, or form a resolution, but they attach to the act, and affix their consequences. Nor, in one sense, does it matter whether we



know them or not. They affix the appropriate results to ignorance as well as to wisdom, to involuntary as well as to voluntary infringements. The fire will burn the finger of the innocent infant who plays with it, as well as the body of the Hindoo widow who leaps into it for self-destruction. How indispensable then is a knowledge of these laws! How long should we remain at liberty, and unpunished, were we to go into a foreign country and proceed at once to the gratification of our desires, without becoming acquainted with its laws? We come into this world, as into a strange country, ignorant of these infinitely numerous laws, and we must learn and obey them, or suffer infinitely numerous penalties for their violation.

All the plans of wise men are founded upon the assumption of the regularity and invariableness of Nature's laws. We may rely with confidence upon their fidelity, for they will never betray us. We anticipate the course of the seasons, and spring, summer, autumn, winter, follow with grateful vicissitude. We foretell the daily apparent revolution of the sun, and it never fails to rise and set at the appointed moment. When we suffer from the irresistible action of these laws, it is because we have not yet discovered them, or are wickedly regardless of them. So in our physical and moral nature, we are subject to the laws of exercise, temperance, veracity, justice, benevolence, piety, and if these are obeyed, it cannot be ill with us. In the midst of all this beauty and harmony, how lamentable it is to find in the houses of our citizens, and often on the counters of our bookstores, stories of ghosts and apparitions, and dream-books and fortune-tellers, by which the most trivial occurrences of the day or the incongruous visions of the night are held to be auguries of human destiny; filling minds, made to be

rational, with illusive hopes and cruel fears ; going back to the times when madmen were the accredited expounders of Nature ; — and proving, if we may express ourselves in mercantile phrase, that the old firm of Night and Chaos are still doing an extensive business. Intelligence is the only weapon wherewith this vermin brood can be hunted. The philosophy or the opinion, which refers events that are within our control to an agency beyond it, bereaves man of a power graciously conferred on him by Heaven for the promotion of his welfare.

On these momentous subjects, we can hardly say any thing beyond what is to be found in our Prospectus, without entering fields of thought which it is here impossible to traverse. Yet, on the other hand, it is scarcely possible even to mention so impulsive a theme, without being roused to expressions in attestation of its value. What deep and unfathomable meaning dwells in the words veracity, impartiality, benevolence, justice, duty ! Attaching to us in our earliest childhood, following us, through every waking moment of our lives, with the imposition of ever-renewing commands ; — attaching to us in the narrowness of the domestic circle, yet, as our knowledge and our relations expand to fill up larger and larger circles, fastening new obligations upon us, commensurate with our powers of performance ; — in this view, the all-infolding law of morality may seem to be a task and a burden ; but when we perceive its consonance to our nature, its pure and inexhaustible rewards for obedience, its power of imparting an all-conquering energy, wherever loftiest efforts are demanded, we must hail its authority as among our highest honors and blessings. For what slaves are they, over whom conscience is not supreme ! What sovereignty awaits those who yield submission to its dictates ! Never since the crea-

tion of man has there been a nation like ours, so nursed in its infancy by the smiles of Providence, endued with such vigor in the first half-century of its being, and made capable in its advancing years at once of rising to such unparalleled power, and of making existence so rich a boon to its multitudinous members. For this very reason, debasement would stand in appalling contrast with its early promises; and if, through immorality, it inflict upon itself suicidal wounds, the pangs of its death-struggle will be terrible in proportion to the vigor of its frame and the tenacity of its young life. It has been well said that it took Rome three hundred years to die. Her giant heart still beat, though corruption festered through all her members. Fiercer will be the throes and deeper the shame of this young republic, if, in the bright morning of its days, and enriched with all the beneficence of heaven, it grows wanton in its strength, and, maddening itself with the cup of vice, perishes basely in sight of its high destiny.

There is every thing in our institutions to give (if that were possible) even an artificial and extraneous value to upright conduct, to nobleness and elevation of character. Our institutions demand men, in whose hearts great thoughts and great deeds are native, spontaneous, irrepressible. And if we do not have a generation of men whose virtues will save us, we shall have a generation whose false pretensions to virtue will ruin us. In a state and country like ours, a thousand selfish considerations tempt men to become hypocrites and to put on the outward guises of morality. Ambition may counsel that honors are most easily won through honest seemings. Avarice may covet a fair reputation for its pecuniary value. Pride and vanity may look for regard without the worth which alone can challenge it. But all such

supports will fail in the hour of temptation. They have no depth of root in the moral sentiments. The germs of morality must be planted in the moral nature of children at an early period of their life. In that genial soil they will flourish and gather strength from surer and deeper sources than those of time-serving policy; like those pasture oaks we see scattered about the fields of the farmers, which, striking their roots downward into the earth far as their topmost branches ascend into the air, draw their nourishment from perennial fountains, and thereby preserve their foliage fresh and green, through seasons of fiery drought, when all surrounding vegetation is scorched to a cinder.

The diversity of religious doctrines, prevalent in our community, would render it difficult to inculcate any religious truths, through the pages of a periodical designed for general circulation, were it not for two reasons: *first*, that the points on which different portions of a Christian community differ among themselves are far less numerous than those on which they agree; and, *secondly*, were it not also true, that a belief in those points in which they all agree, constitutes the best possible preparation for each to proceed in adding those distinctive particulars, deemed necessary to a complete and perfect faith. A work, devoted to education, which did not recognize the truth that we were created to be religious beings, would be as though we were to form a human body forgetting to put in a heart.

While, therefore, we rejoice that each member of this Christian community possesses the Protestant liberty of adopting and avowing such peculiar doctrines as best approve themselves to his own mind, we shall open our columns to them neither for defence nor confutation;—contenting ourselves, in this sphere of duty, with unfold-

ing and applying the great principles of love to God and love to man, on which "hang all the law and the prophets." We have no fear of giving offence to any sect, by teaching children to do unto others as they would that others should do unto them.

We have sketched an imperfect outline of what a man should do, and what he should not do ; so that in educating children they may be prepared to perform the one and discard the other. (The great events of life are the consequences which flow from precedent means.) If we would have improved men, we must have improved means of educating children. By using the appropriate means, it is perfectly practicable to have a community, whose main body shall march forward in the line of industry, prosperity, and uprightness, while a few stragglers or deserters only shall leave its compact ranks to enlist under the banners of vice ; or, by discarding the appropriate means, it is perfectly easy to reverse this condition, so that the main body of society shall be the abandoned, the sensual, the profligate, with only here and there an heroic exception, fleeing apostate ranks. Of all the means in our possession, the common school has precedence, because of its universality ; because it is the only reliance of the vast majority of children ; because it gives them the earliest direction, and an impulse whose force is seldom spent until death. Whatever advances the common school, then, will enhance individual and social well-being for generations to come. History must be written and read with different emotions of joy or grief, as they rise or decline ; and individual minds will bear ineffaceable traces of their good or evil inscriptions. As, to every great river, the confluence of a thousand streams is necessary, so every great result is only the sum — the product — the gathering together — of a

countless number of minute operations. We would go back, therefore, to the fountain of youth. We would act upon the great truth, which led one of the master painters of Italy to begin, in his art, back at the very grinding and mixing of his paints, that no unskilfulness in the preparation of the colors should be found on completion to have marred the beauty or dimmed the clearness of works which were to challenge the admiration of posterity. Hence, to improve the places where the business of education is carried on ; to better what may be called their outward and material organization ; to attend to arrangements merely mechanical ; to adapt with a nicer adjustment the implements and the processes, and to arrange more philosophically the kind and the succession of studies ; to increase the qualifications and the rewards of instructors, and to advance them to that social position they deserve to hold ; to convince the community that their highest interests are dependent upon the culture of their children, — is the sphere of action to which this periodical is dedicated.

CITIZENS OF MASSACHUSETTS, — Will you proffer your aid for the promotion of this object ? It appeals to your patriotism. It appeals to your philanthropy. None of you is so high as not to need the education of the people as a safeguard ; none of you so low as to be beneath its uplifting power. To be emulous of the good name of your ancestors may be an honor ; but to be devoted to the welfare of your posterity is a duty. The one may be founded on selfishness ; the other is allied to religion. We invoke your co-operation, not so much for the outward and perishable good of your children, as for their inward and abiding good ; — not for a temporary object, but for the interminable future. We seek less for their external and mutable interests, than for the establish-

ment of those great principles which lie under the whole length of existence. Let them be educated to be above pride as well as above abasement; to be the master, instead of the slave, of accident and of circumstance; to live less in the region of the senses and appetites, and more in the serener and happier sphere of intellect, of morals, and religion. Then, though you leave them no patrimony, they will never be poor; though temporal adversity befall them, they cannot be deprived of the substantial part of all happiness.

NOVEMBER, 1838.

## AUTHOR'S PREFACE

TO A

VOLUME OF LECTURES NOW REPUBLISHED.

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THE Act creating the Massachusetts Board of Education was passed April 20, 1837. In June following, the Board was organized, and its Secretary chosen. The duties of the Secretary, as expressed in the Act, are, to "collect information of the actual condition and efficiency of the Common Schools, and other means of popular education; and to diffuse as widely as possible, throughout every part of the Commonwealth, information of the most approved and successful methods of arranging the studies, and conducting the education of the young, to the end that all children in this Commonwealth, who depend upon Common Schools for instruction, may have the best education which those schools can be made to impart."

The Board, immediately after its organization, issued an "Address to the Public," inviting the friends of education to assemble in convention, in their respective counties, in the ensuing autumn; and the Secretary was requested to be present at



those conventions, both for the purpose of obtaining information in regard to the condition of the schools, and of explaining to the public what were supposed to be the leading motives and objects of the Legislature in creating the Board.

The author of the following Lectures was a member of the Legislature when the act establishing the Board was passed ; and he was intimately acquainted with the general views of its projectors and advocates. At that time, however, the idea never entered his mind that he should be even a candidate for the Secretaryship ; but when the Board was organized, and the station was offered him, he was induced to accept it ; — not so much from any supposed fitness for the office, as from the congeniality of its duties with all his tastes and predilections, and because he thought that whatever of industry, or of capacity for usefulness, he might possess, could be exerted more beneficially to his fellow-men in this situation than in any other. On accepting the appointment, therefore, it became his duty to meet the county conventions, which were held throughout the State, in the autumn of 1837 ; and the first of the following lectures was prepared for those occasions. Its object was to sketch a rapid outline of deficiencies to be supplied, and of objects to be pursued, in relation to the Common-School system of Massachusetts.

In the session of 1838, the Legislature provided

that a Common-School convention should be held, each year, in each county of the Commonwealth, and that the Secretary should be present at every convention. This law continued in force until the year 1842, when it was repealed. During the first five years, therefore, after the establishment of the Board, a Common-School convention was annually held in each county in the Commonwealth; and in some of the large counties two or more such conventions were held. The Secretary made his annual circuit through the State, and was present at them all; and the first five of the following lectures were respectively delivered before the annual conventions. The lecture on "District-School Libraries" (# 6) was prepared in view of the great deficiency of books in our towns, suitable for the reading of children; and was delivered before Teachers' Associations, Lyceums, &c., in different parts of the State. In the year 1839, a number of the friends of education in Boston instituted a course of lectures for the female teachers in the city, and the lecture on "School Punishments" was delivered, as one of that course.

On almost all the occasions above referred to, a copy of the lecture delivered was requested for the press; but the inadequacy of the views presented, when compared with the magnitude and grandeur of the subject discussed, always induced the author (except in regard to the first lecture, which was printed in 1840, in order to make known, more

generally, the objects which the Board had in view) to decline a compliance with the request. In the month of May last, however, the Board of Education, by a special and unanimous vote, requested him to prepare a volume of his Lectures on Education for the press, and to this request he has now acceded.

In preparing this volume, the author was led to doubt whether he should retain those portions of the lectures which contained special and direct allusions to the times and circumstances in which they were delivered; or whether, by omitting all reference to temporary and passing events, he should publish only those parts in which an attempt was made to discuss broad and general principles, or to enlist parental, patriotic, and religious motives in behalf of the cause. He has been induced to adopt the first part of the alternative, both because it presents the lectures as they were delivered, and because it gives an aspect of practical reform, rather than of theoretic speculation to the work.

The author begs leave to add, that, as the lectures were designed for popular and promiscuous audiences, and pertained to a cause in which but very little general interest was felt, he was constrained not only to confine himself to popular topics, but also to treat them, as far as he was able, in a popular manner. The more didactic expositions of the merits of the great cause of Education, and

some of the relations which that cause holds to the interests of civilization and human progress, he has endeavored to set forth in his Annual Reports; while his more detailed and specific views, in regard to modes and processes of instruction and training, may be found in the volumes of the Common-School Journal. Each one of these three channels of communication with the public he has endeavored to use for the exposition of a particular class of the views and motives belonging to the comprehensive subject of education.

Justice to himself compels the author to add another remark, although of an unpleasant character. Some of the following lectures have been delivered not only before different audiences in Massachusetts, but in other States; and, in several instances, the author has seen, not only illustrations and clauses, but whole sentences taken bodily from the lectures, and transferred to works subsequently published. Should cases of this kind be noticed by the reader, he is requested to compare dates before deciding the question of plagiarism.

Boston, March, 1845.



# LECTURES ON EDUCATION.

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## LECTURE I.

### MEANS AND OBJECTS OF COMMON-SCHOOL EDUCATION.

GENTLEMEN OF THE CONVENTION:—

IN pursuance of notice, contained in a circular letter, lately addressed to the school committees and friends of Education, in this county, I now appear before you, as the Secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education. That Board was constituted by an Act of the Legislature, passed April 20, 1837. It consists of the Governor and Lieutenant Governor of the Commonwealth, for the time being,—who are members *ex officiis*,—and of eight other gentlemen, appointed by the Executive, with the advice and consent of the Council. The object of the Board is, by extensive correspondence, by personal interviews, by the development and discussion of principles, to collect such information, on the great subject of Education, as now lies scattered, buried, and dormant; and after digesting, and, as far as possible, systematizing and perfecting it, to send it forth again to the extremest borders of the State;—so that all improvements which are local, may be enlarged into universal; that what is now transitory and evanescent, may be established in permanency; and that correct views, on this all-important subject, may be

multiplied by the number of minds capable of understanding them.

To accomplish the object of their creation, however, the Board are clothed with no power, either restraining or directory. If they know of better modes of education, they have no authority to enforce their adoption. Nor have they any funds at their disposal. Even the services of the members are gratuitously rendered. Without authority, then, to command, and without money to remunerate or reward, their only resources, the only sinews of their strength, are, their power of appealing to an enlightened community, to rally for the promotion of its dearest interests.

Unless, therefore, the friends of Education, in different parts of the State, shall proffer their cordial and strenuous co-operation, it is obvious, that the great purposes for which the Board was constituted, can never be accomplished. Some persons, indeed, have suggested, that the Secretary of the Board should visit the schools, individually, and impart such counsel and encouragement as he might be able to do;—not reflecting that such is their number and the shortness of the time during which they are kept, that, if he were to allow himself but one day for each school, to make specific examinations and to give detailed instructions, it would occupy something more than sixteen years to complete the circuit;—while the period, between the ages of four and sixteen, during which our children usually attend school, is but twelve years; so that, before the Secretary could come round upon his track again, one entire generation of scholars would have passed away, and one-third of another. At his quickest speed, he would lose sight of one-quarter of all the children in the State. The Board, therefore, have no voice, they have no organ, by which they can make themselves

heard, in the distant villages and hamlets of this land, where those juvenile habits are now forming, where those processes of thought and feeling are, now, to-day, maturing, which, some twenty or thirty years hence, will find an arm, and become resistless might, and will uphold, or rend asunder, our social fabric. The Board may,—I trust they will,—be able to collect light and to radiate it; but upon the people, *upon the people*, will still rest the great and inspiring duty of prescribing to the next generation what their fortunes shall be, by determining in what manner they shall be educated. For it is the ancestors of a people, who prepare and predetermine all the great events in that people's history;—their posterity only collect and read them. No just judge will ever decide upon the moral responsibility of an individual, without first ascertaining what kind of parents he had;—nor will any just historian ever decide upon the honor or the infamy of a people, without placing the character of its ancestors in the judgment-balance. If the system of national instruction, devised and commenced by Charlemagne, had been continued, it would have changed the history of the French people. Such an event as the French Revolution never would have happened with free schools; any more than the American Revolution would have happened without them. The mobs, the riots, the burnings, the lynchings, perpetrated by the *men* of the present day, are perpetrated, because of their vicious or defective education, when children. We see, and feel, the havoc and the ravage of their tiger-passions, now, when they are full grown; but it was years ago that they were whelped and suckled. And so, too, if we are derelict from our duty, in this matter, our children, in their turn, will suffer. If we permit the vulture's eggs to be incubated and hatched, it will then be too late to take care of the lambs.



Some eulogize our system of Popular Education, as though worthy to be universally admired and imitated. Others pronounce it circumscribed in its action, and feeble, even where it acts. Let us waste no time in composing this strife. If good, let us improve it ; if bad, let us reform it. It is of human institutions, as of men, — not any one is so good that it cannot be made better ; nor so bad, that it may not become worse. Our system of education is not to be compared with those of other states or countries, merely to determine whether it may be a little more or a little less perfect than they ; but it is to be contrasted with our highest ideas of perfection itself, and then the pain of the contrast to be assuaged, by improving it, forthwith and continually. The love of excellence looks ever upward towards a higher standard ; it is unimproving pride and arrogance only, that are satisfied with being superior to a lower. No community should rest contented with being superior to other communities, while it is inferior to its own capabilities. And such are the beneficent ordinations of Providence, that the very thought of improving is the germination of improvement.

The science and the art of Education, like every thing human, depend upon culture for advancement. And they would be more cultivated, if the rewards for attention, and the penalties for neglect, were better understood. When effects follow causes,—quick as thunder, lightning,—even infants and idiots learn to beware ; or they act, to enjoy. They have a glimmer of reason, sufficient, in such cases, for admonition, or impulse. Now, in this world, the entire succession of events, which fills time and makes up life, is nothing but causes and effects. These causes and effects are bound and linked together by an adamant law. And the Deity has given us power over the effects, by giving us power over the causes.

This power consists in a knowledge of the connection established between causes and effects,—enabling us to foresee the future consequences of present conduct. If you show to me a handful of perfect seeds, I *know*, that, with appropriate culture, those seeds will produce a growth after their kind ; whether it be of pulse, which is ripened for human use in a month, or of oaks, whose lifetime is centuries. So, in some of the actions of men, consequences follow conduct with a lockstep ; in others, the effects of youthful actions first burst forth as from a subterranean current, in advanced life. In those great relations which subsist between different generations,—between ancestors and posterity,—effects are usually separated from their causes by long intervals of time. The pulsations of a nation's heart are to be counted, not by seconds, but by years. Now, it is in this class of cases, where there are long intervals lying between our conduct and its consequences ; where one generation sows, and another generation reaps ;—it is in this class of cases, that the greatest and most sorrowful of human errors originate. Yet, even for these, a benevolent Creator has supplied us with an antidote. He has given us the faculty of reason, whose especial office and function it is, to discover the connection between causes and effects ; and thereby to enable us so to regulate the causes of to-day, as to predestinate the effects of to-morrow. In the eye of reason, causes and effects exist in proximity,—in juxtaposition. They lie side by side, whatever length of time, or distance of space, comes in between them. If I am guilty of an act or a neglect, to-day, which will certainly cause the infliction of a wrong, it matters not whether that wrong happens on the other side of the globe, or in the next century. Whenever or wherever it happens, it is mine ; it belongs to me ; my

conscience owns it, and no sophistry can give me absolution. Who would think of acquitting an incendiary, because the train which he had laid and lighted, first circuited the globe before it reached and consumed his neighbor's dwelling? From the nature of the case, in education, the effects are widely separated from the causes. They happen so long afterwards, that the reason of the community loses sight of the connection between them. It does not bring the cause and the effect together, and lay them, and look at them, side by side.

If, instead of twenty-one *years*, the course of Nature allowed but twenty-one *days*, to rear an infant to the full stature of manhood, and to sow in his bosom the seeds of unbounded happiness or of unspeakable misery, — I suppose, in that case, the merchant would abandon his bargains, and the farmer would leave the in-gathering of his harvest, and even the drunkard would hie homeward from the midst of his revel, and *that* twenty-one days would be spent, without much sleep, and with many prayers. And yet, it cannot be denied, that the consequences of a vicious education, inflicted upon a child, are now precisely the same as they would be, if, at the end of twenty-one days after an infant's birth, his tongue were already roughened with oaths and blasphemy; or he were seen skulking through society, obtaining credit upon false pretences, or with rolls of counterfeit bills in his pocket; or were already expiating his offences in the bondage and infamy of a prison. And the consequences of a virtuous education, at the end of twenty-one years, are now precisely the same as they would be, if, at the end of twenty-one days after his birth, the infant had risen from his cradle into the majestic form of manhood, and were possessed of all those qualities and attributes, which a being created in the image of God *ought to have*; — with

a power of fifty years of beneficent labor compacted into his frame ;—with nerves of sympathy, reaching out from his own heart and twining around the heart of society, so that the great social wants of men should be a part of his consciousness ;—and with a mind able to perceive what is right, prompt to defend it, or, if need be, to die for it. It ought to be understood, that none of these consequences become any the less certain, because they are more remote. It ought to be universally understood and intimately felt, that, in regard to children, all precept and example ; all kindness and harshness ; all rebuke and commendation ; all forms, indeed, of direct or indirect education, affect mental growth, just as dew, and sun, and shower, or untimely frost, affect vegetable growth. Their influences are integrated and made one with the soul. They enter into spiritual combination with it, never afterwards to be wholly decomposed. They are like the daily food eaten by wild game,—so pungent and saporific in its nature, that it flavors every fibre of their flesh, and colors every bone in their body. Indeed, so pervading and enduring is the effect of education upon the youthful soul, that it may well be compared to a certain species of writing-ink, whose color, at first, is scarcely perceptible, but which penetrates deeper and grows blacker by age, until, if you consume the scroll over a coal-fire, the character will still be legible in the cinders. It ought to be understood and felt, that, however it may be in a social or jurisprudential sense, it is nevertheless true, in the most solemn and dread-inspiring sense, that, by an irrepealable law of Nature, the iniquities of the fathers are still visited upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation. Nor do the children suffer for the iniquities only, of their parents ; they suffer for their neglect and even for their ignorance. Hence I have always admired

that law of the Icelanders, by which, when a minor child commits an offence, the courts first make judicial inquiry, whether his parents have given him a good education ; and, if it be proved they have not, the child is acquitted and the parents are punished. In both the old Colonies of Plymouth, and of Massachusetts Bay, if a child, over sixteen, and under twenty-one years of age, committed a certain capital offence against father or mother, he was allowed to arrest judgment of death upon himself, by showing that his parents, in the language of the law, "had been very unchristianly negligent in his education."

How, then, are the purposes of education to be accomplished ? However other worlds may be, this world of ours is evidently constructed on the plan of producing ends by using means. Even the Deity, with his Omniscience and his Omnipotence, carries forward our system, by processes so minute, and movements so subtile, as generally to elude our keenest inspection. He might speak all the harvests of the earth, and all the races of animals and of men, into full-formed existence, at a word, and yet the tree is elaborated from the kernel, and the wing from the chrysalis, by a series of processes, which occupies years, and sometimes centuries, for its completion. Education, more than any thing else, demands not only a scientific acquaintance with mental laws, but the nicest art in the detail, and the application of means, for its successful prosecution ; because influences, imperceptible in childhood, work out more and more broadly into beauty or deformity, in after-life. No unskilful hand should ever play upon a harp, where the tones are left, forever, in the strings.

In the first place, the best methods should be well ascertained ; in the second, they should be universally diffused. In this Commonwealth, there are about three

thousand Public Schools, in all of which the rudiments of knowledge are taught. These schools, at the present time, are so many distinct, independent communities, each being governed by its own habits, traditions, and local customs. There is no common, superintending power over them; there is no bond of brotherhood or family between them. They are strangers and aliens to each other. The teachers are, as it were, embedded, each in his own school district, and they are yet to be excavated and brought together, and to be established, each as a polished pillar of a holy temple. As the system is now administered, if any improvement in principles or modes of teaching is discovered by talent or accident, in one school, instead of being published to the world, it dies with the discoverer. No means exist for multiplying new truths, or even for preserving old ones. A gentleman, filling one of the highest civil offices in this Commonwealth,—a resident in one of the oldest counties and in one of the largest towns in the State,—a sincere friend of the cause of education,—recently put into my hands a printed report, drawn up by a clergyman of high repute, which described, as was supposed, an important improvement in relation to our Common Schools, and earnestly enjoined its general adoption, when it happened to be within my own knowledge, that the supposed new discovery had been in successful operation for sixteen years, in a town but little more than sixteen miles distant. Now, in other things, we act otherwise. If a manufacturer discovers a new combination of wheels, or a new mode of applying water or steam-power, by which stock can be economized, or the value of fabrics enhanced ten per cent., the information flies over the country at once; the old machinery is discarded, the new is substituted. Nay, it is difficult for an inventor to preserve the

secret of his invention, until he can secure it by letters-patent. Our mechanics seem to possess a sort of keen, grey-hound faculty, by which they can scent an improvement afar off. They will sometimes go in disguise to the inventor, and offer themselves as workmen ; and instances have been known of their breaking into his workshop, by night, and purloining the invention. And hence that progress in the mechanic arts, which has given a name to the age in which we live, and made it a common wonder. Improvements in useful, and often in useless, arts, command solid prices, — twenty, fifty, or even a hundred thousand dollars, — while improvements in education, in the means of obtaining new guaranties for the permanence of all we hold dear, and for making our children and our children's children wiser and happier, these are scarcely topics of conversation or inquiry. Do we not need, then, some new and living institution, some animate organization, which shall at least embody and diffuse all that is now known on this subject, and thereby save, every year, hundreds of children from being sacrificed to experiments which have been a hundred times exploded ?

Before noticing some particulars, in which a common channel for receiving and for disseminating information, may subserve the prosperity of our Common Schools, allow me to premise that there is one rule, which, in all places, and in all forms of education, should be held as primary, paramount, and, as far as possible, exclusive. Acquirement and pleasure should go hand in hand. They should never part company. The pleasure of acquiring should be the incitement to acquire. A child is wholly incapable of appreciating the ultimate value or uses of knowledge. In its early beginnings, the motive of general, future utility will be urged in vain. Tell an abecedarian, as an inducement to learn his letters, of the

sublimities of poetry and eloquence, that may be wrought out of the alphabet, and to him it is not so good as moon-shine. Let me ask any man whether he ever had, when a child, any just conception of the uses, to which he is now, as a man, daily applying his knowledge. How vain is it, then, to urge upon a child, as a motive to study, that which he cannot possibly understand! Nor is the motive of fear preferable. Fear is one of the most debasing and dementing of all the passions. The sentiment of fear was given us, that it might be roused into action, by whatever should be shunned, scorned, abhorred. The emotion should never be associated with what is to be desired, toiled for, and loved. If a child appetizes his books, then lesson-getting is free labor. If he revolts at them, then it is slave-labor. Less is done, and the little is not so well done. Nature has implanted a feeling of curiosity in the breast of every child, as if to make herself certain of his activity and progress. The desire of learning alternates with the desire of food; the mental with the bodily appetite. The former is even more craving and exigent in its nature than the latter, and acts longer without satiety. Men sit with folded arms, even while they are surrounded by objects of which they know nothing. Who ever saw that done by a child? But we cloy, disgust, half-extirpate, this appetite for knowledge, and then deny its existence. Mark a child, when a clear, well-defined, vivid conception seizes it. The whole nervous tissue vibrates. Every muscle leaps. Every joint plays. The face becomes auroral. The spirit flashes through the body, like lightning through a cloud. Tell a child the simplest story, which is adapted to his present state of mental advancement, and therefore intelligible, and he will forget sleep, leave food untasted, nor would he be enticed from hearing it, though you should give



him for playthings, shining fragments broken off from the sun. Observe the blind, and the deaf and dumb. So strong is their inborn desire for knowledge, such are the amazing attractive forces of their minds for it, that, although those natural inlets, the eye and the ear, are closed, yet they will draw it inward, through the solid walls and incasements of the body. If the eye be curtained with darkness, it will enter through the ear. If the ear be closed in silence, it will ascend along the nerves of touch. Every new idea that enters into the presence of the sovereign mind, carries offerings of delight with it, to make its coming welcome. Indeed, our Maker created us in blank ignorance, for the very purpose of giving us the boundless, endless pleasure of learning new things; and the true path for the human intellect leads onward and upward from ignorance towards omniscience, ascending by an infinity of steps, each novel and delightful.

The voice of Nature, therefore, forbids the infliction of annoyance, discomfort, pain, upon a child, while engaged in study. If he actually suffers from position, or heat, or cold, or fear, not only is a portion of the energy of his mind withdrawn from his lesson, — all of which should be concentrated upon it, — but, at that indiscriminating age, the pain blends itself with the study, makes part of the remembrance of it, and thus curiosity and the love of learning are deadened, or turned away towards vicious objects. This is the philosophy of children's hating study. We insulate them by fear; we touch them with non-conductors; and then, because they emit no spark, we gravely aver that they are non-electric bodies. If possible, pleasure should be made to flow like a sweet atmosphere around the early learner, and pain be kept beyond the association of ideas. You cannot open blossoms with a

north-east storm. The buds of the hardiest plants will wait for the genial influences of the sun, though they perish while waiting.

The first practical application of these truths, in relation to our Common Schools, is to School-house Architecture, — a subject so little regarded, yet so vitally important. The construction of school-houses involves, not the love of study and proficiency, only, but health and length of life. I have the testimony of many eminent physicians to this fact. They assure me that it is within their own personal knowledge, that there is, annually, loss of life, destruction of health, and such anatomical distortion as renders life hardly worth possessing, growing out of the bad construction of our school-houses. Nor is this evil confined to a few of them, only. It is a very general calamity. I have seen many school-houses, in central districts of rich and populous towns, where each seat connected with a desk, consisted only of an upright post or pedestal, jutting up out of the floor, the upper end of which was only about eight or ten inches square, without side-arms or back-board ; and some of them so high that the feet of the children in vain sought after the floor. They were beyond soundings. Yet, on the hard top of these stumps, the masters and misses of the school must balance themselves, as well as they can, for six hours in a day. All attempts to preserve silence in such a house are not only vain, but cruel. Nothing but absolute empalement could keep a live child still, on such a seat ; and you would hardly think him worth living, if it could. The pupils will resort to every possible bodily evolution for relief ; and, after all, though they may *change the place, they keep the pain*. I have good reasons for remembering one of another class of school-houses, which the scientific would probably call the *sixth* order of architecture,

— the wicker-work order, summer-houses for winter residence, — where there never was a severely cold day, without the ink's freezing in the pens of the scholars while they were writing; and the teacher was literally obliged to compromise between the sufferings of those who were exposed to the cold of the windows and those exposed to the heat of the fire, by not raising the thermometer of the latter above ninety degrees, until that of the former fell below thirty. A part of the children suffered the Arctic cold of Captains Ross and Parry, and a part, the torrid heat of the Landers, without, in either case, winning the honors of a discoverer. It was an excellent place for the teacher to illustrate one of the facts in geography; for five steps would have carried him through the five zones. Just before my present circuit, I passed a school-house, the roof of which, on one side, was trough-like; and down towards the eaves there was a large hole; so that the whole operated like a tunnel to catch all the rain and pour it into the school-room. At first, I did not know but it might be some apparatus designed to explain the Deluge. I called and inquired of the mistress, if she and her little ones were not sometimes drowned out. She said she should be, only that the floor leaked as badly as the roof, and drained off the water. And yet a healthful, comfortable school-house can be erected as cheaply as one which, judging from its construction, you would say, had been dedicated to the evil genius of deformity and suffering.

There is another evil in the construction of our school-houses, whose *immediate* consequences are not so bad, though their *remote* ones are indefinitely worse. No fact is now better established, than that a man cannot live without a supply of about a gallon of fresh air, every minute; nor enjoy good health, indeed, without much

more. The common air, as is now well known, is mainly composed of two ingredients, one only of which can sustain life. The action of the lungs upon the vital portion of the air, changes its very nature, converting it from a life-sustaining to a life-destroying element. As we inhale a portion of the atmosphere, it is healthful ; — the same portion, as we exhale it, is poisonous. Hence, ventilation in rooms, especially where large numbers are collected, is a condition of health and life. Privation admits of no excuse. To deprive a child of comfortable clothes, or wholesome food, or fuel, may sometimes, possibly, be palliated. These cost money, and often draw hardly upon the scanty resources of the poor. But what shall we say of stinting and starving a child, in regard to this prime necessary of life, fresh air ? — of holding his mouth, as it were, lest he should obtain a sufficiency of that vital element, which God, in His munificence, has poured out, a hundred miles deep, all around the globe ? Of productions, reared or transported by human toil, there may be a dearth. At any rate, frugality in such things is commendable. But to put a child on short allowances out of this sky-full of air, is enough to make a miser weep. It is as absurd, as it would have been for Noah, while the torrents of rain were still descending, to have put his family upon short allowances of water. This vast quantity of air was given us to supersede the necessity of ever using it at second-hand. Heaven has ordained this matter with adorable wisdom. That very portion of the air which we turn into poison, by respiring it, becomes the aliment of vegetation. What is death to us, is life to all verdure and flowerage. And again, vegetation rejects the ingredient which is life to us. Thus the equilibrium is forever restored ; or rather, it is never destroyed. In this perpetual circuit, the atmosphere is

forever renovated, and made the sustainer of life, both for the animal and vegetable worlds.

A simple contrivance for ventilating the school-room, unattended with any perceptible expense, would rescue children from this fatal, though unseen evil. It is an indisputable fact, that, for years past, far more attention has been paid, in this respect, to the construction of jails and prisons, than to that of school-houses. Yet, why should we treat our felons better than our children? I have observed in all our cities and populous towns, that, wherever stables have been recently built, provision has been made for their ventilation. This is encouraging, for I hope the children's turn will come, when gentlemen shall have taken care of their horses. I implore physicians to act upon this evil. Let it be removed, extirpated, cut off, surgically.

I cannot here stop to give even an index of the advantages of an agreeable site for a school-house; of attractive, external appearance; of internal finish, neatness, and adaptation; nor of the still more important subject of having two rooms for all large schools, — both on the same floor, or one over the other, — so as to allow a separation of the large from the small scholars, for the purpose of placing the latter, at least, under the care of a female teacher. Each of these topics, and especially the last, is worthy of a separate essay. Allow me, however, to remark, in passing, that I regard it as one of the clearest ordinances of nature, that woman is the appointed guide and guardian of children of a tender age. And she does not forego, but, in the eye of prophetic vision, she anticipates and makes her own, all the immortal honors of the academy, the forum, and the senate, when she lays their deep foundations, by training up children in the way they should go.

A great mischief, — I use the word *mischief*, because it implies a certain degree of wickedness, — a great mischief is suffered in the diversity and multiplicity of our school books. Not more than twenty or thirty different kinds of books, exclusive of a school library, are needed in our Common Schools ; and yet, though I should not dare state the fact, if I had not personally sought out the information from most authentic sources, there are now, in actual use in the schools of this State, more than three hundred different kinds of books ; and, in the markets of this and the neighboring States, seeking for our adoption, I know not how many hundreds more. The standards, in spelling, pronunciation, and writing ; in rules of grammar and in processes in arithmetic, are as various as the books. Correct language, in one place, is provincialism in another. While we agree in regarding the confusion of Babel as a judgment, we unite in confounding it more, as though it were a blessing. But is not uniformity on these subjects desirable ? Are there not some of these books, to which all good judges, on comparison, would award the preference ? Could they not be afforded much cheaper for the great market which uniformity would open ; thus furnishing better books at lower prices ? And why not teach children aright, the first time ? It is much harder to unlearn than to learn. Why go through three processes instead of one, by first learning, then unlearning, and then learning, again ? This mischief grew out of the immense profits formerly realized from the manufacture of school books. There seems never to have been any difficulty in procuring reams of recommendations, because patrons have acted under no responsibility. An edition once published must be sold ; for the date has become almost as important in school books, as in almanacs. All manner of devices are daily used to displace the old

books, and to foist in new ones. The compiler has a cousin in the town of A, who will decry the old and recommend the new; or a literary gentleman in the city of B has just published some book on a different subject, and is willing to exchange recommendations, even; or the author has a mechanical friend, in a neighboring town, who has just patented some new tool, and who will recommend the author's book, if the author will recommend his tool! Publishers often employ agents to hawk their books about the country; and I have known several instances where such a peddler,—or picaroon,—has taken all the old books of a whole class in school, in exchange for his new ones, book for book,—looking, of course, to his chance of making sales after the book had been established in the school, for reimbursement and profits; so that at last, the children have to pay for what they supposed was given them. On this subject, too, cannot the mature views of competent and disinterested men, residing, respectively, in all parts of the State, be the means of effecting a much-needed reform?

There is another point, where, as it seems to me, a united effort among the friends of education would, in certain branches of instruction, increase tenfold the efficiency of our Common Schools. I mean, the use of some simple apparatus, so as to employ the eye, more than the ear, in the acquisition of knowledge. After the earliest years of childhood, the superiority of the eye over the other senses, in quickness, in precision, in the vastness of its field of operations, and in its power of penetrating, like a flash, into any interstices, where light can go and come, is almost infinite. The senses of taste, and smell, and touch, seem to be more the servants of the body than of the soul; and, amongst the infinite variety of objects in the external world, hearing takes notice of

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sounds only. Close your eyes, and then, with the aid of the other senses, examine a watch, an artisan's workshop, a manufactory, a ship, a steam-engine ; and how meagre and formless are all the ideas they present to you. But the eye is the great thoroughfare between the outward and material infinite, and the inward and spiritual infinite. The mind often acquires, by a glance of the eye, what volumes of books and months of study could not reveal so livingly through the ear. Every thing that comes through the eye, too, has a vividness, a clear outline, a just collocation of parts, — each in its proper place, — which the other senses can never communicate. Ideas or impressions acquired through vision are long-lived. Those acquired through the agency of the other senses often die young. Hence, the immeasurable superiority of this organ is founded in Nature. There is a fund of truth in the old saying, that "seeing is believing." There never will be any such maxim in regard to the other senses. To use the ear instead of the eye, in any case where the latter is available, is as preposterous, as it would be for our migratory birds, in their overland passage, to walk rather than to fly. We laugh at the Germans, because in using their oxen, they attach the load to the horns, instead of the neck ; but do we not commit a much greater absurdity, in communicating knowledge through the narrow fissure of the ear, which holds communication only with a small circle of things, and in that circle, only with things that utter a sound, instead of conveying it through the broad portals of the earth and heaven surveying eye ? Nine tenths, — may I not say ninety-nine hundredths, — of all our Common School instruction are conveyed through the ear ; or, — which is the same thing, — through the medium of written instead of spoken *words*, where the eye has been taught to do



the work of the ear. In teaching those parts of geography which comprise the outlines and natural features of the earth, and in astronomy, the use of the globe and the planetarium would reduce the labor of months to as many hours. Ocular evidence, also, is often indispensable for correcting the imperfections of language, as it is understood by a child. For instance, (and I take this illustration from fact and not from imagination,) a child, born in the interior, and who has never seen the ocean, is taught that the earth is *surrounded* by an elastic medium, called the atmosphere. He thereby gets the idea of perfect circumfusion and envelopment. In the next lesson, he is taught that an island is a small body of land *surrounded* by water. If he has a quick mind, he may get the idea that an island is land, enveloped in water, as the earth is in air. Mature minds always modify the meaning of words and sentences by numerous rules, of which a child knows nothing. If, when speaking of the Deity to a man of common intelligence, I use the word "power," he understands omnipotence; and if I use the same word when speaking of an ant, he understands that I mean strength enough to lift a grain;—but a child would require explanations, limiting the meaning of the word in the one case, and extending it in the other.

Other things being equal, the pleasure which a child enjoys, in studying or contemplating, is proportioned to the liveliness of his perceptions and ideas. A child who spurns books, will be attracted and delighted by visible objects of well-defined forms and striking colors. In the one case, he sees things through a haze; in the other, by sunlight. A contemplative child, whose mind gets as vivid images from reading as from gazing, always prefers reading. Although it is undoubtedly true, that taste and predilection, in regard to any subject, will give brightness

and distinctness to ideas, yet it is also true that bright and distinct ideas will greatly modify tastes and predilections. Now the eye may be employed much more extensively than it ever has been, in giving what I will venture to call the geography of ideas, that is, a perception, where one idea bounds on another; where the province of one idea ends, and that of the adjacent ideas begins. Could children be habituated to fixing these lines of demarcation, to seeing and feeling ideas as distinctly as though they were geometrical solids, they would then experience an insupportable uneasiness, whenever they were lost in fog-land, and among the Isles of the Mist; and this uneasiness would enforce investigation, survey, and perpetual outlook, and, in after-life, a power would exist of applying luminous and exact thought to extensive combinations of facts and principles, and we should have the materials of philosophers, statesmen and chief-justices. The pleasure which children enjoy in visiting our miserable toy-shop collections, — the dreams of crazy brains, *done* into wood and pewter, — comes mainly from the vividness, the oneness, wholeness, completeness, of their perceptions. The gewgaws do not give delight, because of their grotesqueness, but in spite of it. Natural ideas derived through a microscope, or from any mechanism which would stamp as deep an imprint, and glow with as quick a vitality, would give them far greater delight. And how different, as to attainments in useful knowledge, would children be, at the end of eight or ten years, accordingly as they had sought their gratifications from one or the other of these sources.

And what higher delight, what reward, at once so innocent and so elevating, as to explain by means of suitable apparatus, to the larger scholars in a school, the cause and manner of an eclipse of the sun or moon! And

when those impressive phenomena occur, how beautiful to witness the manifestations of wonder and of reverence for God, which spring spontaneously from the intelligent observation of such sublime spectacles, instead of their being regarded with the horrible imaginings of superstition, or with such stupid amazement as belongs only to the brutes that perish! If a model were given, every ingenious boy, with a few broken window panes and a pocket-knife, could make a prism. With this, the rainbow, the changing colors of the dew-drop, the gorgeous light of the sunset sky, could be explained; and thus might the minds of children be early imbued with a love of pure and beautiful things, and led upward towards the angel, instead of downward towards the brute, from this middle ground of humanity. Imbue the young mind with these sacred influences, and they will forever constitute a part of its moral being; they will abide with it, and tend to uphold and purify it, wherever it may be cast by fortune in this tumultuous arena of life. A spirit so softened and penetrated, will be

“Like the vase in which roses have once been distilled;  
You may break, you may ruin the vase, if you will,  
But the scent of the roses will hang round it still.”

At the last session of the Legislature, a law was enacted, authorizing school districts to raise money for the purchase of apparatus and Common School libraries, for the use of the children, to be expended in sums not exceeding thirty dollars for the first year, and ten dollars for any succeeding year. Trifling as this may appear, yet I regard the law as hardly second in importance to any which has been passed since the year 1647, when Common Schools were established. Every district can find some secure place for preserving them, until, in repairing or

rebuilding schoolhouses, a separate apartment can be provided for their safe-keeping. As soon as one half the benefits of these instruments of learning shall be understood, I doubt not that public-spirited individuals will be found, in most towns, who will contribute something to the library ; and artisans, too, who will feel an honorable pleasure in adding something to the apparatus, wrought by their own hands, — perhaps devised by their own ingenuity. “Build dove-holes,” says the proverb, “and the doves will come.” And what purer satisfaction, what more sacred object of ambition, can any man propose to himself, than to give the first impulse to an improvement, which will go on increasing in value forever ! It may be said, that mischievous children will destroy or mutilate whatever is obtained for this purpose. But children will not destroy or injure what gives them pleasure. Indeed, the love of malicious mischief, the proneness to deface whatever is beautiful, — this vile ingredient in the old Saxon blood, wherever it flows, — originated, and it is aggravated, by the almost total want, amongst us, of objects of beauty, taste, and elegance, for our children to grow up with, to admire, and to protect.

The expediency of having District School Libraries is fast becoming a necessity. It is too late to stop the art of printing, or to arrest the general circulation of books. Reading of some kind, the children will have ; and the question is, whether it is best that this reading should be supplied to them by the choice of men, whose sole object is gain, or whether it shall be prepared by wise and benevolent men, whose object is to do good. Probably, not one child in ten in this State, has free access to any library of useful and entertaining knowledge. Where there are town, parish, or social libraries, they either do not consist of suitable books, or they are burdened with

restrictions which exclude more than are admitted. A District School Library would be open to all the children in the district. They would enter it independently. Wherever there is genius, the library would nourish it. Talents would not die of inaction, for want of some sphere for exercise. Habits of reading and reflection would be formed, instead of habits of idleness and malicious mischief. The wealth and prosperity of Massachusetts are not owing to natural position or resources. They exist, in despite of a sterile soil and an inhospitable clime. They do not come from the earth, but from the ingenuity and frugality of the people. Their origin is good thinking, carried out into good action ; and intelligent reading in a child will result in good thinking in the man or woman. But there is danger, it is said, of reading bad books. So there is danger of eating bad food ; shall we therefore have no harvests ? No ! It was the kindling excitement of a few books, by which those Massachusetts boys, John Adams and Benjamin Franklin, first struck out an intellectual spark, which broadened into magnitude and brightened into splendor, until it became a mighty luminary, which now stands, and shall forever stand, among the greater lights in the firmament of glory.

But in the selection of books for school libraries, let every man stand upon his honor, and never ask for the introduction of any book, because it favors the distinctive views of his sect or party. A wise man prizes only the free and intelligent assent of unprejudiced minds ; he disdains a slavish and non-compos echo, even to his best-loved opinions. In striving together for a common end, peculiar ends must neither be advocated nor assailed. Strengthen the intellect of children, by exercise upon the objects and laws of Nature ; train their feelings to habits

of order, industry, temperance, justice ; to the love of man, because of his wants, and to the love of God, because of his universally-acknowledged perfections ; and, so far as public measures, applicable to all, can reach, you have the highest human assurance, that, when they grow up, they will adopt your favorite opinions, if they are right, or discover the true reasons for discarding them, if they are wrong.

An advantage altogether invaluable, of supplying a child, by means of a library and of apparatus, with vivid ideas and illustrations, is, that he may always be possessed, in his own mind, of correct standards and types with which to compare whatever objects he may see in his excursions abroad ; and that he may also have useful subjects of reflection, whenever his attention is not engrossed by external things. A boy who is made clearly to understand the philosophical principle on which he flies his kite, and then to recognize the same principle in a wind or a water-wheel, and in the sailing of a ship ; — wherever business or pleasure may afterwards lead him, if he sees that principle in operation, he will mentally refer to it, and think out its applications, when, otherwise, he would be singing or whistling. Twenty years would work out immense results from such daily observation and reflection. Dr. Franklin attributed much of his practical turn of mind, — which was the salient point of his immortality, — to the fact, that his father, in his conversations before the family, always discussed some useful subject, or developed some just principle of individual or social action, instead of talking forever about trout-catching or grouse-shooting ; about dogs, dinners, dice, or trumps. In its moral bearings this subject grows into immense importance. How many months, — may I not say years, — in a child's life, when, with spontaneous activity, his mind

hovers and floats wherever it listeth ! As he sits at home, amid familiar objects, or walks frequented paths, or lies listlessly in his bed, if his mind be not pre-occupied with some substantial subjects of thought, the best that you can hope is, that it will wander through dream-land, and expend its activity in chasing shadows. Far more probable is it, especially if the child is exposed to the contamination of profane or obscene minds, that in these seasons of solitude and reverie, the cockatrice's eggs of impure thoughts and desires will be hatched. And what *boy*, at least, is there who is not in daily peril of being corrupted by the evil communications of his elders ? We all know, that there are self-styled gentlemen amongst us, — *self-styled gentlemen*, — who daily, and hourly, lap their tongues in the foulness of profanity ; and though, through a morally-insane perversion, they may restrain themselves, in the presence of ladies and of clergymen, yet it is only for the passing hour, when they hesitate not to pour out the pent-up flood, to deluge and defile the spotless purity of childhood, — and this, too, at an age when these polluting stains sink, centre-deep, into their young and tender hearts, so that no moral bleachery can ever afterwards wholly cleanse and purify them. No parent, no teacher, can ever feel any rational security about the growth of the moral nature of his child, unless he contrives in some way to learn the tenor of his secret, silent meditations, or prepares the means, beforehand, of determining what those meditations shall be. A child may soon find it no difficult thing, to converse and act by a set of approved rules, and then to retire into the secret chambers of his own soul, and there to riot and gloat upon guilty pleasures, whose act would be perdition, and would turn the fondest home into a hell. But there is an antidote, — I do not say for all, but for most, of this peril. The mind

of children can be supplied with vivid illustrations of the works of Nature and of Art ; its chambers can be hung round with picture-thoughts and images of truth, and charity, and justice, and affection, which will be companions to the soul, when no earthly friend can accompany it.

It is only a further development of this topic, to consider the inaptitude of many of our educational processes, for making accurately-thinking minds. It has been said by some one, that the good sense and sound judgment, which we find in the community, are only what have escaped the general ravage of a bad education. School studies ought to be so arranged, as to promote a harmonious development of the faculties. In despotic Prussia, a special science is cultivated, under the name of *methodik*, the scope of which is to arrange and adapt studies, so as to meet the wants and exercise the powers of the opening mind. In free America, we have not the name ; indeed, we can scarcely be said to have the idea. Surely, the farmer, the gardener, the florist, who have established rules for cultivating every species of grain, and fruit, and flower, cannot doubt, that, in the unfolding and expanding of the young mind, some processes will be congenial, others fatal. Those whose business it is to compound ingredients, in any art, weigh them with the nicest exactness, and watch the precise moments of their chemical combinations. The mechanic selects all his materials with the nicest care, and measures all their dimensions to a hair's breadth ; and he knows that if he fails in aught, he will produce a weak, loose, irregular fabric. Indeed, can you name any business, avocation, profession, or employment, whatever, — even to the making of hob-nails or wooden skewers, — where chance, ignorance, or accident, is ever rewarded with a perfect product ? But in no call-



ing is there such a diversity as in education, — diversity in principles, diversity in the application of those principles. Discussion, elucidation, the light of a thousand minds brought to a focus, would result in discarding the worst and in improving even the best. Under this head are included the great questions respecting the order and succession of studies; the periods of alternation between them; the proportion between the exact and the approximate sciences; and what is principle and what is subsidiary, in pursuing them.

There is a natural order and progression in the development of the faculties: "First the blade, then the ear, afterwards the full corn in the ear." And in the mind, as in the grain, the blade may be so treated that the full corn will never appear. For instance, if any faculty is brooded upon and warmed into life before the period of its natural development, it will have a precocious growth, to be followed by weakness, or by a want of symmetry and proportion in the whole character. Consequences still worse will follow, where faculties are cultivated in the reverse order of their natural development. Again, if collective ideas are forced into a child's mind, without his being made to analyze them, and understand the individual ideas of which they are composed, the probability is, that the collective idea will never be comprehended. Let me illustrate this position by a case where it is least likely to happen, that we may form some idea of its frequency in other things. A child is taught to count *ten*. He is taught to repeat the words, *one*, *two*, &c., as words, merely; and if care be not taken, he will attach no more comprehensive idea to the word *ten*, than he did to the word *one*. He will not think of ten ones, as he uses it. In the same way, he proceeds to use the words, hundred, thousand, million, &c., — the idea in his mind, not keep-

ing within hailing distance of the signification of the words used. Hence there is generated a habit of using words, not as the representatives of ideas, but as sounds, merely. How few children there are of the age of sixteen years,—an age at which almost all of them have ceased to attend upon our schools,—who have any adequate conception of the power of the signs they have been using. How few of them know even so simple a truth as this, that, if they were to count one, every second, for ten hours in a day, without intermission, it would take about twenty-eight days to count a million. Yet they have been talking of millions, and hundreds of millions, as though they were units. Now, suppose you speak to such a person of millions of children, growing up under a highly elaborated system of vicious education, unbalanced by any good influences; or suppose you appeal to him, in behalf of a million of people wailing beneath the smitings of the oppressor's rod,—he gets no distinct idea of so many as fifty; and therefore he has no intellectual substratum, upon which to found an appropriate feeling, or by which to graduate its intensity.

Again; in geography, we put a quarto-sized map, or perhaps a globe no larger than a goose's egg, into a child's hands, and we invite him to spread out his mind over continents, oceans, and archipelagoes, at once. This process does not expand the mind of the child to the dimensions of the objects, but it belittles the objects to the nutshell capacity of the mind. Such a course of instruction may make precocious, green-house children; but you will invariably find, that, when boys are prematurely turned into little men, they remain little men, always. Physical geography should be commenced by making a child describe and plot a room with its fixtures, a house with its apartments, the adjoining yards, fields, roads or streets,

hills, waters, &c. Then embracing, if possible, the occasion of a visit to a neighboring town, or county, that should be included. Here, perpetual reference must be had to the points of the compass. After a just extension has been given to his ideas of a county, or a state, then that county or state should be shown to him on a globe; and, cost what labor or time it may, his mind must be expanded to a comprehension of relative magnitudes, so that his idea of the earth shall be as adequate to the size of the earth, as his idea of the house or the field was to the size of the house or the field. Thus the pupil founds his knowledge of unseen things upon the distinct notions of eyesight, in regard to familiar objects. Yet I believe it is not very uncommon to give the mind of the young learner a continent, for a single intellectual meal, and an ocean to wash it down with. It recently happened, in a school within my own knowledge, that a class of small scholars in geography, on being examined respecting the natural divisions of the earth,—its continents, oceans, islands, gulfs, &c.,—answered all the questions with admirable precision and promptness. They were then asked, by a visitor, some general questions respecting their lesson, and, amongst others, whether they had ever seen the earth about which they had been reciting; and they unanimously declared, in good faith, that they never had. Do we not find here an explanation, why there are so many men whose conceptions on all subjects are laid down on so small a scale of miles,—so many thousand leagues to a hair's breadth? By such absurd processes, no vivid ideas can be gained, and therefore no pleasure is enjoyed. A capacity of wonder is destroyed in a day, sufficient to keep alive the flame of curiosity for years. The subjects of the lessons cease to be new, and yet are not understood. Curiosity, which is the hunger and

thirst of the mind, is forever cheated and balked ; for nothing but a real idea can give real, true, intellectual gratification. A habit, too, is inevitably formed of reciting, without thinking. At length, the most glib recitation becomes the best ; and the less the scholars are delayed by thought, the faster they can prate, as a mill clacks quicker when there is no grist in the hopper. Thoroughness, therefore, — thoroughness, and again I say, *thoroughness*, for the sake of the knowledge, and still more for the sake of the habit, — should, at all events, be enforced ; and a pupil should never be suffered to leave any subject, until he can reach his arms quite around it, and clinch his hands upon the opposite side. Those persons, who know a little of every thing but nothing well, have been aptly compared to a certain sort of pocket-knife, which some over-curious people carry about with them, which, in addition to a common knife, contains a file, a chisel, a saw, a gimlet, a screw-driver, and a pair of scissors, but all so diminutive, that the moment they are needed for use, they are found useless.

It seems to me that one of the greatest errors in education, at the present time, is the desire and ambition, at single lessons, to teach complex truths, whole systems, doctrines, theorems, which years of analysis are scarcely sufficient to unfold ; instead of commencing with simple elements, and then rising, by gradations, to combined results. All is administered in a mass. We strive to introduce knowledge into the child's mind, the great end first. When lessons are given in this way, the pupil, being unable to comprehend the ideas, tries to remember the words, and thus, at best, is sent away with a single fact, instead of a principle, explanatory of whole classes of facts. The lessons are learned by rote ; and when a teacher practises upon the rote system, he uses the minds

of the pupils, just as they use their own slates, in working arithmetical questions ; — whenever a second question is to be wrought, the first is sponged out, to make room for it. What would be thought of a teacher of music, who should give his pupils the most complicated exercises, before they had learned to sound simple notes ? It is said of the athlete, Milo of Crotona, that he began by lifting a calf, and continuing to lift it daily, he gained strength as fast as the animal gained weight ; so that he was able to lift it when it became an ox. Had he begun by straining to lift an ox, he would probably have broken down, and been afterwards unable to lift even a calf. The point to which I would invite the regards of the whole community, is, whether greater attention should not be paid to gradation, to progression in a natural order, to adjustment, to the preparation of a child's mind for receiving the higher forms of truth, by first making it thoroughly acquainted with their elements. The temptation to this error is, perhaps, the most seductive, that ever beguiles a teacher from his duty. He desires to make his pupils *appear* well. He forgets that the great objects of their education lie in the power, and dignity, and virtue of life, and not in their recitations at the end of the quarter. Hence, he strives to prepare them for the hastening day of exhibition. They must be able to state, in words, the great results, in science, which human reason has achieved, after almost sixty centuries of labor. For this purpose, — in which they also are tempted to conspire, — he loads their memories with burden after burden of definitions and formulas ; which is about as useful a process, — and is it not also about as honest ? — as it would be for the rearer of nursery trees to buy golden pippins in the market, and, tying them upon the branches of his young trees, to palm them off upon purchasers, as though the delicious fruit

had been elaborated from the succulence of the stock he sells.

Another question of method, to which I most earnestly solicit the attention of teachers and of the whole public, is, whether there is not too much teaching of words, instead of things. Never was a severer satire uttered against human reason, than that of Mirabeau, when he said, "words are things." That single phrase explains the whole French Revolution. Such a revolution never could have occurred amongst a people who spoke things, instead of words. Just so far as words are things, just so far the infinite contexture of realities pertaining to body and soul, to earth and heaven, to time and eternity, is nothing. The ashes, and shreds, and wrecks of every thing else are of some value; but of words not freighted with ideas, there is no salvage. It is not *words*, but words *fitly spoken*, that are like apples of gold in pictures of silver. Words are but purses; things, the shining coin within them. Why buy seventy or eighty thousand purses, — for it is said we have about that number of untechnical words in the language, — without a copper for deposit? I believe it is almost universally true, that young students desire to be composers; and as universally true, that they dread composition. When they would compose, of what service, then, are those columns of spelling-book words, which they have committed to memory by the furlong? Where then, too, are the rich mines of thought contained in their Readers, their First-Class Books, and their little libraries? These they have been accustomed to consider merely as instruments, to practise pronunciation, emphasis, and cadence, upon. They have moved, for years, in the midst of ideas, like blind men in picture-galleries. Hence they have no knowledge of *things*, and their relations; and, when called upon for

composition, they have nothing to compound. But, as the outward and visible sign of composition is a sheet-full of words, a sheet is filled, though more from the dictionary than from the head. This practice comes at last, to make them a kind of sportsmen or warriors, who think their whole business is to fire, not to hit. Some, who have a strong verbal memory, become dexterous in the use of language ; so that, if they can have two ideas, on any subject, to set up at the ends, as termini, they will fill up with words any distance of space between them. Those who have not this verbal memory, become the wind-driven bubbles of those who have. When the habit is confirmed, of relying on the verbal faculty, the rest of the mind dies out. The dogma taught by Aristotle, that Nature abhors a vacuum, is experimentally refuted. I know of but one compensation for these word-men ; I believe they never become insane. Insanity requires some mind for a basis.

The subject of penal discipline, I hardly dare to mention ; especially discipline by corporal punishment. In this department, extremes both of doctrine and of practice prevail. The public have taken sides, and parties are arrayed against each other. Some repudiate and condemn it altogether. With others, it is the great motive-power ; and they consider it as, at least, the first and second, if not the three estates in the realm of school-keeping. Generally speaking, I fear that but little judgment and forethought are brought to the decision of its momentous questions. It cannot be discussed, alone. It is closely connected with intellectual progress ; its influences pervade the whole moral nature ; and it must be looked at, in its relations to them. The justifiable occasions, if any, for inflicting it ; the mode, and emphatically, the spirit ; of its administration ; its instruments ; its extent ; the

conduct that should precede and should follow it, — are questions worthy of the deepest attention. That corporal punishment, considered by itself, and without reference to its ultimate object, is an evil, probably none will deny. Yet, with almost three thousand public schools in this State, composed of all kinds of children, with more than five thousand teachers, of all grades of qualification, to govern them, probably the evils of corporal punishment must be endured, or the greater ones of insubordination and mutiny be incurred. I hesitate, also, to speak so fully of the magnitude of these evils, as I would wish to do; because there are some excellent teachers, who manage schools without resorting to it; while others, ambitious for the same honor, but destitute of skill and of the divine qualities of love, patience, sympathy, by which alone it can be won, have discarded what they call corporal punishment, but have resorted to other modes of discipline, which, though they may bear a milder name, are, in reality, more severe. To imprison timid children in a dark and solitary place; to brace open the jaws with a piece of wood; to torture the muscles and bones by the strain of an unnatural position, or of holding an enormous weight; to inflict a wound upon the instinctive feelings of modesty and delicacy, by making a girl sit with the boys, or go out with them, at recess; to bring a whole class around a fellow-pupil, to ridicule and shame him; to break down the spirit of self-respect, by enforcing some ignominious compliance; to give a nick-name; — these, and such as these, are the gentle appliances, by which some teachers, who profess to discard corporal punishment, maintain the empire of the schoolroom; — as though the muscles and bones were less corporeal than the skin; as though a wound of the spirit were of less moment than one of the flesh; and the body's blood more



sacred than the soul's purity. But of these solemn topics, it is impossible here to speak. I cannot, however, forbear to express the opinion, that punishment should never be inflicted, except in cases of the extremest necessity ; while the experiment of sympathy, confidence, persuasion, encouragement, should be repeated, for ever and ever. The fear of bodily pain is a degrading motive ; but we have authority for saying, that where there is perfect love, every known law will be fulfilled. Parents and teachers often create that disgust at study, and that incorrigibleness and obstinacy of disposition, which they deplore. It is a sad exchange, if the very blows, which beat arithmetic and grammar into a boy, should beat confidence and manliness out. So it is quite as important to consider what feelings are excited, in the mind, as what are subdued, by the punishment. Which side gains, though the evil spirit of roguery or wantonness be driven out, if seven other evil spirits, worse than the first, — sullenness, irreverence, fraud, lying, hatred, malice, revenge, — are allowed to come in ? The motive from which the offence emanated, and the motives with which the culprit leaves the bar of his judge and executioner, are every thing. If these are not regarded, the offender may go away worse than he came, in addition to a gratuitous flagellation. To say a child knows better, is nothing ; if he knows better, why does he not do better ? The answer to this question reveals the difficulty ; and whoever has not patience and sagacity to solve that inquiry, is as unworthy of the parental trust, as is the physician, of administering to the sick, who prescribes a fatal nostrum, and says, in justification, that he knew nothing of the disease. In fine, if any thing, in the wide range of education, demands patience, forethought, judgment, and the all-subduing spirit of love, it is this ; and though it may be too much to say,

that corporal punishment can be disused by all teachers, with regard to all scholars, in all schools, yet it may be averred, without exception, that it is never inflicted with the right spirit, nor in the right measure, when it is not more painful to him who imposes, than to him who receives it.

Of emulation in school, as an incitement to effort, I can here say but a word; but I entreat all intelligent men to give to this subject a most careful consideration. And let those who use it, as a quickener of the intellect, beware, lest it prove a depraver of the social affections. There is no necessary incompatibility between the upward progress of one portion of our nature, and the lower and lower debasement of another. The intellect may grow wise, while the passions grow wicked. No cruelty towards a child can be so great as that which barter morals for attainment. If, under the fiery stimulus of emulation, the pupil comes to regard a successful rival with envy or malevolence, or an unsuccessful one with arrogance or disdain; if, in aiming at the goal of precedence, he loses sight of the goal of perfection; if, to gain his prize, he becomes the hypocrite, instead of the reverer of virtue; then, though his intellect should enter upon the stage of life with all the honors of an early triumph, yet the noblest parts of his nature, — his moral and social affections, — will be the victims, led captive in the retinue. Suppose, in some Theological Seminary, a prize were offered for the best exposition of the commandment, "*Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself*," and two known competitors were to task their intellects to win it; and, on the day of trial, one of these neighbor-loving rivals, with dilated nostril and expanded frame, should clutch the honor; while the other neighbor-loving rival, with quivering lip and livid countenance, stood by, — the vul-

ture of envy, all the while, forking her talons into his heart; — would it not be that very mixture of the ludicrous and the horrible, which demons would choose for the subject of an epigram! Paint, or chisel the whole group of *neighbor-loving* rivals, and pious doctors sitting around and mingling, — in one chalice, the hellebore of pride, and in another, the wormwood of defeat, — to be administered to those who should be brothers, and can aught be found more worthy to fill a niche in the council-hall of Pandemonium! Who has not seen winter, with its deepest congelations, come in between ingenuous-minded and loving fellow-students, whose hearts would otherwise have run together, like kindred drops of water? Who has not witnessed a consumption, — not of the lungs, but of the heart; nay, both of lungs and heart, — wasting its victims with the smothered frenzy of emulation? It surely is within the equity of the prayer, “lead *us* not into temptation,” not to lead others into it. And ought not the teacher, who, as a general and prevalent, — I do not say a universal rule, — cannot sustain order and insure proficiency, in a school, without resorting to fear and emulation, to consider, whether the fault be in human nature or in himself? And will there ever be any more of that secret, silent beneficence amongst us, where the left hand knows not of the blessings scattered by the right? — will there ever be any less of this deadly strife for the ostensible signs of precedence, in the social and political arena, while the germs of emulation are so assiduously cultivated in the schoolroom, the academy, and the college? The pale ambition of men, ready to sacrifice country and kind for self, is only the fire of youthful emulation, heated to a white heat. Yet, there is an inborn sentiment of emulation, in all minds, and there are external related objects of that sentiment. The

excellent, who may be present with us, but who are advanced in life ; the great and good, who are absent, but whose fame is everywhere ; the illustrious dead ; — these are the objects of emulation. A rivalry with these yields sacred love, not consuming envy. On these, therefore, let the emulous and aspiring gaze, until their eyes overflow with tears, and every tear will be the baptism of honor and of purity.

Such are some of the most obvious topics, belonging to that sacred work, — the education of children. The science, or philosophical principles on which this work is to be conducted ; the art, or manner in which those principles are to be applied, must all be rightly settled and generally understood, before any system of Public Instruction can operate with efficiency. Yet all this has been mainly left to chance. Compared with its deserts, how disproportionate, how little, the labor, cost and talent, devoted to it. We have a Congress, convening annually, at almost incredible expense, to decide upon questions of tariff, internal improvement, and currency. We have a State Legislature, continuing in session more than a fourth part of every year, to regulate our internal polity. We have Courts, making continual circuits through the Commonwealth, to adjudicate upon doubtful rights of person or property, however trivial. Every great department of literature and of business has its Periodical. Every party, political, religious and social, has its Press. Yet Education, that vast cause, of which all other causes are only constituent parts ; that cause, on which all other causes are dependent, for their vitality and usefulness, — if I except the American Institute of Instruction, and a few local, feeble, unpatronized, though worthy associations, — Education has literally nothing, in the way of comprehensive organization and of united effort, acting for a com-

mon end, and under the focal light of a common intelligence. It is under these circumstances, it is in view of these great public wants, that the Board of Education has been established, — not to legislate, not to enforce, — but to collect facts, to educe principles, to diffuse a knowledge of improvements ; — in fine, to submit the views of men who have thought much upon this subject to men who have thought but little.

To specify the labors which education has yet to perform, would be only to pass in review the varied interests of humanity. Its general purposes are to preserve the good and to repudiate the evil which now exist, and to give scope to the sublime law of progression. It is its duty to take the accumulations in knowledge, of almost six thousand years, and to transfer the vast treasure to posterity. Suspend its functions for but one generation, and the experience and the achievements of the past are lost. The race must commence its fortunes anew, and must again spend six thousand years, before it can grope its way upward from barbarism to the present point of civilization. With the wisdom, education must also teach something of the follies of the past, for admonition and warning ; for it has been well said, that mankind have seldom arrived at truth, on any subject, until they had first exhausted its errors.

Education is to instruct the whole people in the proper care of the body, in order to augment the powers of that wonderful machine, and to prevent so much of disease, of suffering, and of premature death. The body is the mind's instrument ; and the powers of the mind, like the skill of an artisan, may all be baffled, through the imperfection of their utensils. The happiness and the usefulness of thousands and tens of thousands of men and women have been destroyed, from not knowing a few of

the simple laws of health, which they might have learned in a few months; — nay, which might have been so impressed upon them, as habits, in childhood, that they would never think there was any other way. I do not speak of the ruin that comes from slavery to throned appetites, where the bondage might continue in defiance of knowledge; but I speak of cases, where the prostration of noble powers and the suffering of terrible maladies result from sheer ignorance and false views of the wise laws to which God has subjected our physical nature. No doubt, Voltaire said truly, that the fate of many a nation had depended upon the good or bad digestion of its minister; and how much more extensively true would the remark be, if applied to individuals! How many men perfectly understand the observances by which their horses and cattle are made healthy and strong, while their children are puny, distempered, and have chronic diseases, at the very earliest age at which so highly-finished an article as a chronic disease can be prepared. There is a higher art than the art of the physician; — the art, not of *restoring*, but of *making* health. Health is a product. Health is a manufactured article, — as much so as any fabric of the loom or the workshop; and, except in some few cases of hereditary taint, or of organic lesion from accident or violence, the how much, or the how little, health any man shall enjoy, depends upon his treatment of himself, or rather, upon the treatment of those who manage his infancy and childhood, and create his habits for him. Situated, as we are, in a high latitude, with the Atlantic ocean on one side, and a range of mountains on the other, we cannot escape frequent and great transitions in the temperature of our weather. Our region is the perpetual battle-ground of the torrid and the arctic, where they alternately prevail;

and it is only by a sort of average that we call it *temperate*. Yet to this natural position we must adapt ourselves, or abandon it, or suffer. Hence the necessity of *making* health, in order to endure natural inclemencies; and hence also the necessity of including the simple and benign laws on which it depends, in all our plans of education. Certainly, our hearts should glow with gratitude to Heaven, for all the means of health; but every expression indicating that health is a Divine gift, in any other sense than all our blessings are a Divine gift, should be discarded from the language; and it should be incorporated into the forms of speech, that a man prepares his own health, as he does his own house.

Education is to inspire the love of truth, as the supremest good, and to clarify the vision of the intellect to discern it. We want a generation of men above deciding great and eternal principles, upon narrow and selfish grounds. Our advanced state of civilization has evolved many complicated questions respecting social duties. We want a generation of men capable of taking up these complex questions, and of turning all sides of them towards the sun, and of examining them by the white light of reason, and not under the false colors which sophistry may throw upon them. We want no men who will change, like the vanes of our steeples, with the course of the popular wind; but we want men who, like mountains, will change the course of the wind. We want no more of those patriots who exhaust their patriotism, in lauding the past; but we want patriots who will do for the future what the past has done for us. We want men capable of deciding, not merely what is right in principle, — *that* is often the smallest part of the case; — but we want men capable of deciding what is right in means, to accomplish what is right in principle. We want men who

will speak to this great people in counsel, and not in flattery. We want godlike men who can tame the madness of the times, and, speaking divine words in a divine spirit, can say to the raging of human passions, "Peace, be still;" and usher in the calm of enlightened reason and conscience. Look at our community, divided into so many parties and factions, and these again subdivided, on all questions of social, national, and international, duty; — while, over all, stands, almost unheeded, the sublime form of Truth, eternally and indissolubly *One*! Nay, further, those do not agree in thought who agree in words. Their unanimity is a delusion. It arises from the imperfection of language. Could men, who subscribe to the same forms of words, but look into each other's minds, and see, there, what features their own idolized doctrines wear, friends would often start back from the friends they have loved, with as much abhorrence as from the enemies they have persecuted. Now, what can save us from endless contention, but the love of truth? What can save us, and our children after us, from eternal, implacable, universal war, but the greatest of all human powers, — the power of impartial thought? Many, — may I not say most, — of those great questions, which make the present age boil and seethe, like a caldron, will never be settled, until we have a generation of men who were educated, from childhood, to seek for truth and to revere justice. In the middle of the last century, a great dispute arose among astronomers, respecting one of the planets. Some, in their folly, commenced a war of words, and wrote hot books against each other; others, in their wisdom, improved their telescopes, and soon settled the question forever. Education should imitate the latter. If there are momentous questions which, with present lights, we cannot demonstrate and determine, let



us rear up stronger, and purer, and more impartial, minds, for the solemn arbitrament. Let it be for ever and ever inculcated, that no bodily wounds or maim, no deformity of person, nor disease of brain, or lungs, or heart, can be so disabling or so painful as error; and that he who heals us of our prejudices is a thousand fold more our benefactor, than he who heals us of mortal maladies. Teach children, if you will, to beware of the bite of a mad dog; but teach them still more faithfully, that no horror of water is so fatal as a horror of truth, because it does not come from our leader or our party. Then shall we have more men who will think, as it were, under oath; — not thousandth and ten thousandth transmitters of falsity; — not copyists of copyists, and blind followers of blind followers; but men who can track the Deity in his ways of wisdom. A love of truth, — *a love of truth*; this is the pool of a moral Bethesda, whose waters have miraculous healing. And though we lament that we cannot bequeath to posterity this precious boon, in its perfectness, as the greatest of all patrimonies, yet let us rejoice that we can inspire a love of it, a reverence for it, a devotion to it; and thus circumscribe and weaken whatever is wrong, and enlarge and strengthen whatever is right, in that mixed inheritance of good and evil, which, in the order of Providence, one generation transmits to another.

If we contemplate the subject with the eye of a statesman, what resources are there, in the whole domain of Nature, at all comparable to that vast influx of power which comes into the world with every incoming generation of children? Each embryo life is more wonderful than the globe it is sent to inhabit, and more glorious than the sun upon which it first opens its eyes. Each one of these millions, with a fitting education, is capable of adding something to the sum of human happiness, and

of subtracting something from the sum of human misery ; and many great souls amongst them there are, who may become instruments for turning the course of nations, as the rivers of water are turned. It is the duty of moral and religious education to employ and administer all these capacities of good, for lofty purposes of human beneficence, as a wise minister employs the resources of a great empire. "Suffer little children to come unto me," said the Saviour, "and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of Heaven." And who shall dare say, that philanthropy and religion cannot make a better world than the present, from beings like those in the kingdom of Heaven !

Education must be universal. It is well, when the wise and the learned discover new truths ; but how much better to diffuse the truths already discovered, amongst the multitude ! Every addition to true knowledge is an addition to human power ; and while a philosopher is discovering one new truth, millions may be propagated amongst the people. Diffusion, then, rather than discovery, is the duty of our government. With us, the qualification of voters is as important as the qualification of governors, and even comes first, in the natural order. Yet there is no Sabbath of rest in our contests about the latter, while so little is done to qualify the former. The theory of our government is, — not that all men, however unfit, shall be voters, — but that every man, by the power of reason and the sense of duty, shall become fit to be a voter. Education must bring the practice as nearly as possible to the theory. As the children now are, so will the sovereigns soon be. How can we expect the fabric of the government to stand, if vicious materials are daily wrought into its frame-work ? Education must prepare our citizens to become municipal officers, intelligent jurors,

honest witnesses, legislators, or competent judges of legislation, — in fine, to fill all the manifold relations of life. For this end, it must be universal. The whole land must be watered with the streams of knowledge. It is not enough to have, here and there, a beautiful fountain playing in palace-gardens; but let it come like the abundant fatness of the clouds upon the thirsting earth.

Finally, education, alone, can conduct us to that enjoyment which is, at once, best in quality and infinite in quantity. God has revealed to us, — not by ambiguous signs, but by His mighty works; — not in the disputable language of human invention, but by the solid substance and reality of things, — what He holds to be valuable, and what He regards as of little account. The latter He has created sparingly, as though it were nothing worth; while the former he has poured forth with immeasurable munificence. I suppose all the diamonds ever found, could be hid under a bushel. Their quantity is little, because their value is small. But iron ore, — without which mankind would always have been barbarians; without which they would now relapse into barbarism, — he has strewed profusely all over the earth. Compare the scantiness of pearl, with the extent of forests and coal-fields. Of one, little has been created, because it is worth little; of the others, much, because they are worth much. His fountains of naphtha, how few, and myrrh and frankincense, how exiguous; but who can fathom His reservoirs of water, or measure the light and the air! This principle pervades every realm of Nature. Creation seems to have been projected upon the plan of increasing the quantity, in the ratio of the intrinsic value. Emphatically is this plan manifested, when we come to that part of creation we call *ourselves*. Enough of the materials of worldly good has been created to answer this

great principle, — that, up to the point of competence, up to the point of independence and self-respect, few things are more valuable than property ; beyond that point, few things are of less. And hence it is, that all acquisitions of property, beyond that point, — considered and used as mere property, — confer an inferior sort of pleasure, in inferior quantities. However rich a man may be, a certain number of thicknesses of woollens or of silks is all he can comfortably wear. Give him a dozen palaces, he can live in but one at a time. Though the commander be worth the whole regiment, or ship's company, he can have the animal pleasure of eating only his own rations ; and any other animal eats with as much relish as he. Hence the wealthiest, with all their wealth, are driven back to a cultivated mind, to beneficent uses and appropriations ; and it is then, and then only, that a glorious vista of happiness opens out into immensity and immortality.

Education, then, is to show to our youth, in early life, this broad line of demarcation between the value of those things which can be owned and enjoyed by but one, and those which can be owned and enjoyed by all. If I own a ship, a house, a farm, or a mass of metals called precious, my right to them is, in its nature, sole and exclusive. No other man has a right to trade with my ship, to occupy my house, or gather my harvests, or to appropriate my treasures to his use. They are mine, and are incapable, both of a sole and of a joint possession. But not so of the treasures of knowledge, which it is the duty of education to diffuse. The same truth may enrich and ennoble all intelligences at once. Infinite diffusion subtracts nothing from depth. None are made poor because others are made rich. In this part of the Divine economy, the privilege of primogeniture attaches to all ; and every son and daughter of Adam are heirs to an infinite patrimony.

If I own an exquisite picture or statue, it is mine exclusively. Even though publicly exhibited, but few could be charmed by its beauties, at the same time. It is incapable of bestowing a pleasure, simultaneous and universal. But not so of the beauty of a moral sentiment; not so of the glow of sublime emotion; not so of the feelings of conscious purity and rectitude. These may shed rapture upon all, without deprivation of any; be imparted, and still possessed; transferred to millions, yet never surrendered; carried out of the world, yet still left in it. These may imparadise mankind, and, undiluted, unattenuated, be sent round the whole orb of being. Let education, then, teach children this great truth, written as it is on the forefront of the universe, that God has so constituted this world, into which He has sent them, that whatever is really and truly valuable may be possessed by all, and possessed in exhaustless abundance.

And now, you, my friends! who feel that you are patriots and lovers of mankind,—what bulwarks, what ramparts for freedom can you devise, so enduring and impregnable, as intelligence and virtue! Parents! among the happy groups of children whom you have at home,—more dear to you than the blood in the fountain of life,—you have not a son nor a daughter who, in this world of temptation, is not destined to encounter perils more dangerous than to walk a bridge of a single plank, over a dark and sweeping torrent beneath. But it is in your power and at your option, with the means which Providence will graciously vouchsafe, to give them that firmness of intellectual movement and that keenness of moral vision,—that light of knowledge and that omnipotence of virtue,—by which, in the hour of trial, they will be able to walk, with unfaltering step, over the deep and yawning abyss below, and to reach the opposite shore, in safety, and honor, and happiness.

# **LECTURE II.**

**1838.**



## LECTURE II.

### SPECIAL PREPARATION A PREREQUISITE TO TEACHING.

GENTLEMEN OF THE CONVENTION:—

AFTER the lapse of another year, we are again assembled to hold counsel together for the welfare of our children. On this occasion, we have much reason to meet each other with voices of congratulation and hearts of gladness. During the past year, the cause of Popular Education, in this Commonwealth, has gained some suffrages of public opinion. On presenting its wants and its claims to citizens in every part of the State, I have found that there were many individuals who appreciate its importance, and who only awaited an opportunity to give utterance and action to their feelings;—in almost every town, some,—in many, a band.

Some of our hopes, also, have become facts. The last Legislature acted towards this cause, the part of a wise and faithful guardian. Inquiries having been sent into all parts of the Commonwealth, to ascertain the deficiencies in our Common School system, and the causes of failure in its workings; and the results of those inquiries having been communicated to the Legislature,—together with suggestions for the application of a few obvious and energetic remedies,—that body forthwith enacted such laws as the wants of the system most immediately and imperiously demanded. Probably, at no session since the origin of our Common School system, have laws more propitious



to its welfare been made, than during the last. True, the substantive parts of the great system of Public Instruction, pre-existed ; but, in many respects, these parts were like the wheels of some excellent machine, unskilfully put together ; and hence, if not absolutely refusing to go, for want of proper adjustment, yet going, at best, only according to our expressive word, *bunglingly*. The enactments of the last session, have, to no inconsiderable extent, adjusted the relative parts of this machinery, in an admirable manner ; and it now only remains for the people to do their part, by vigorously applying the power that is to move it.

For instance, the law formerly compelled towns, under a penalty, to choose school committees ; and it accumulated such an amount of duties upon these officers, that the efficiency, nay, I might almost say, the very existence, of the schools, for any useful purpose, depended upon their intelligence and fidelity ; and yet, because this law provided no compensation for their services, nor even indemnity for their actual expenses, it left the whole weight of private interest gravitating against public duty. In the apprehension of many persons, too, there seemed to be something of officiousness and obtrusion, when the committees entered earnestly and faithfully upon the discharge of the legal obligations they had assumed. An office was lightly esteemed to which public opinion attached no rank, and the law no emolument. It was an office, too, in which fidelity often gave offence, and one whose duties were always deemed burdensome, and but rarely accounted honorable. Hence, the punctilious discharge of its various duties, required a higher degree of public spirit, or a greater enthusiasm in the noble cause of education, than the present condition of our society is likely to furnish. Besides, many towns circumvented the law ; for, though the

law had provided that the *office* of school committee man should not lie dormant, yet it could make no such wakeful provision in regard to the *officer*. Hence, school committees were not unfrequently chosen, by the towns, with a tacit, and sometimes even with an express understanding, that they were to sleep during the whole of the school terms, and only to rouse themselves up in sufficient season to make such an annual Return, as would secure a share of the income of the school fund of their respective towns. But this condition of things is now changed. By the late law, school committees are hereafter to receive a moderate compensation for services rendered, — or, at least, a sufficient sum to reimburse the expenses which they actually incur. Is it too much, therefore, for us now to say, in regard to these officers, that, not only their own townsmen, but the friends of education generally, have a right to expect, that they will so fulfil the requisitions of the law, that a looker-on may know what the law is, by seeing what the committees do, as well as he could by reading its provisions in the pages of the statute book? Is this demand too great, when we consider the claims which the office has upon the efforts of all wise and benevolent men? The committees are to prescribe the books which are to be used in the schools. They are to see that every child whose parents are unable to supply it with books, is supplied at the expense of the town. They are to visit every district school soon after its opening, and shortly before its close, and once a month during its continuance; — and this duty of visitation, let me say, means something more than just stopping, when engaged on some other errand or business, fastening a horse at the schoolhouse door, and going in for a few minutes to rest or to warm. Emphatically, — I would speak it with tenfold emphasis, — they are to see that none but the very

best persons who can possibly be procured, are put in as keepers of that inestimable, unutterable treasure, the children of the district.

Another provision of the late law requires the committee of each town to keep a record, in a permanent form, of all their acts, votes, and proceedings; and, at the end of their official year, to deliver the record-book to their successors in office.

If the affairs of the pettiest manufacturing corporation cannot be systematically nor economically conducted, without a sworn clerk, and the registration of every corporate act, must not the incomparably greater interests of the schools suffer, if all the orders and regulations of the school committees have no other depository, nor means of verification in case of dispute, than the uncertainty of human memory, and the faithlessness of oral testimony?

A far more important duty imposed upon school committees by the new law, — one which will form an epoch in the history of education in Massachusetts, — is that of making to the towns, annually, a “detailed” report of the condition of the schools, “designating particular improvements and defects in the methods or means of education, and stating such facts and suggestions in relation thereto, as, in their opinion, will best promote the interests, and increase the usefulness of said schools.” The significance of this provision lies in the word “*detailed*.” The reports are to be specific, not general. They are to expose errors and abuses, and to be accompanied by plans for their rectification. They are to particularize improvements, and to devise the means for their attainment. The mere fact of knowing that a report must be made at the end of the year, will attract the attention of committee-men to a variety of facts, and will suggest numerous considerations, which would otherwise elude both their ob-

servation and reflection. We are so constituted that, the moment we have a fixed purpose in our minds, there arises, at once, a sort of elective affinity between that purpose and its related ideas; and the latter will come, one after another, and, as it were, crystallize around the former. Besides, no man ever comprehends his own views clearly and definitely, or ever avails himself of all the resources of his own mind, until he reduces his thoughts to writing, or embodies them in some visible, objective form. To make a "detailed report," which is based upon facts, which will be useful to the town, and creditable to the committee, will doubtless require great attention and forethought. But if school committees perform this duty with half that far-reaching sagacity, that almost incredible thoroughness, which is always displayed by those town-agents who are chosen to employ counsel, and hunt up evidence, in pauper-cases, such reports will be most invaluable documents. And yet the manner in which this duty is performed will settle the question prospectively, for many a child, whether he shall be a pauper or not,—not the question of the body's pauperism only, but of the soul's pauperism.

These annual reports of the committees are by law to be deposited with the town clerk. They are to be transcribed, and the copy forwarded to the office of the Secretary of State, for the use of the Board of Education. Each succeeding year, therefore, there will be placed in the hands of the Board, three hundred reports, describing the condition of the schools, in every part of the State, with more or less particularity and ability, according to the intelligence and fidelity of the respective committees. It seems to me that selections may then be made,—if the work is not too great,—of the most instructive portions of the whole body of these reports. Let a volume

consisting of these selections be transmitted to every town in the State. Each town will then receive back its own contribution, in a permanent form, multiplied by the contributions of three hundred other towns. Such a course, if adopted, will make known to all, the views, the plans and experiments of each. It will be a Multiplying-glass, increasing each beam of light, three hundred times. I venture to predict that, hereafter, no document will be found to transcend these, in value, and in the interest and gratitude they will inspire. Posterity will here see what was done for them by their fathers. Surely, the interest inherent in these records, cannot be less than that which has lately led the Commonwealth to publish those Colonial and Revolutionary papers, which trace out the very paths in the wilderness, through which, under the guidance of the pillar and the cloud, our fathers came out of the land of Egypt and out of the house of bondage. Compared with the bondage of ignorance and vice, Pharaoh was clement and his task-masters merciful.\*

Another provision of the law requires that Registers, in such form as shall be prescribed by the Board of Education, shall be kept in all the schools. As a means of collecting accurate statistics, registers are indispensable. They will also reveal a fact, to the existence of which the public eye seems almost wholly closed. I mean the amount or extent of non-attendance upon our schools, and the enormous losses thereby occasioned. In the hand of an adroit teacher, too, the register may be made an efficient means of remedying that irregularity of attendance which it discloses. If the school is what it should be, the remark will be literally true, that every mark in the register indicating a vacancy in the child's seat at school, will indicate a corresponding vacuum in his mind.

\* See Appendix A.

But, before I go on to speak of other provisions of the law, perhaps there may be a class of persons ready to ask, — “Why all this interference? Why this obtrusion of the State into the concerns of the individual? Are not our children,” say they, “our own? Who can be presumed to care more for them than we do? And whence your authority,” they demand, “to fetter our free-will, and abridge our sovereignty in their management?” The vagabond, the drunkard, the monster-parent who wishes to sell his children to continuous labor, — who, for the pittance of money they can earn, is willing they should grow up without schooling, without instruction, and be used, year after year, as parts of machinery, — these may cry out to the Legislature, — “By what right do you come between us and our offspring? By what right do you appoint a Board of Education and a Secretary to pry into our domestic arrangements, and take from us our parental rights? We wish to be our own Board of Education, and Secretary also.” Such questions may, perhaps, be honestly put, and therefore should be soberly answered.

The children, whom parents have brought into this world, are carried forward by the ceaseless flow of time, and the irresistible course of nature, and will soon be men. They are daily gathering forces and passions of fearful energy, soon to be expended upon society. The powers of citizenship, which reach every man’s home and every man’s hearth, will soon be theirs. In a brief space, these children will have the range of the whole community, and will go forth to pollute or to purify, to be bane or blessing to those who are to live with them, and to come after them. On the day when their minority ceases, their parents will deliver them over, as it were, into the hands of society, without any regard to soundness or unsoundness in their condition. Forthwith, that society has

to assume the entire responsibility of their conduct for life ; — for society, in its collective capacity, is a real, not a nominal sponsor and godfather for all its children. Society has no option whether to accept or to reject them. Society cannot say to any parent, “ Take back this felon-brood of yours ; we never ordered any such recruits ; we know not what to do with them ; we dread them, and therefore we will not receive them ; ” — but society must equally accept them, whether they are pieces of noblest workmanship, inwrought with qualities of divinest beauty and excellence, or whether they are mere trumpery and gilded pasteboard, impossible to be thought of for any useful purpose. Now, in those cases from which the objectors draw their analogies, the circumstances are totally different. If I make a general contract with my neighbor for an article of merchandise, the intendment of the law is, that it shall be, at least, of a fair, merchantable quality ; — and if it be valueless, or even materially defective, in stock or workmanship, the law exonerates me from all obligation to receive it. I may cast it back into the hands of the producer, and make the loss wholly his, not mine. So if, for a sound price, I contract with a dealer to furnish me a horse for a specified journey or business, and he, instead of providing for me an animal suitable for the object stipulated, sends me an old hack, whose only merit is that one might study all the diseases of farriery upon him, — there is not a court or jury in the country but would make the fraudulent jockey take back the beast, and pay smart-money, and all the costs of litigation. But not so, when parents deliver over to the community a son who carries the poison of asps beneath his glistening tongue ; or a daughter, who, from her basilisk eye, streams guilt into whomsoever she looks upon. Twenty-one years after a child’s birth, — and often much earlier than that, —

be he sot, brawler, libeller, poisoner, lyncher, — society has, none the less, to take him into her bosom, and bear his stings and stabs; — and this, as I suppose, is the reason why all those good citizens who care what they have in their bosoms, have an undoubted right to take these precautions beforehand.

Another provision of law, which transfers the power to select and employ teachers, from the prudential to the town's committee, — unless the town shall otherwise order, — is worthy of commendation. While this arrangement allows a continuance of the old system, in towns where it is preferred, it proposes a course which is far better, and which is sure to be adopted just as fast as the interests of education and the best means of promoting it, become better understood and more appreciated by the community.

But not inferior in importance to any of the preceding, is another law, passed by the Legislature at its last session. It is not a compulsory, but a permissive enactment. You doubtless anticipate, that I refer to the law which authorizes the union of two or more existing school districts, so as to form a Union or Central school, for teaching more advanced studies to the older children.

Heretofore the practice, in most towns, has been, to subdivide territory into smaller and smaller districts; and this practice has drawn after it the calamitous consequences of stinted means, and of course, cheap schoolhouses, cheap teachers and short schools. Under this weakening process, many of our children have fared like southern fruits in a northern clime, where, owing to the coldness of the soil and the shortness of the season, they never more than half ripen. Immature fruits, at the close of the year, are not only valueless, but they sometimes breed physical diseases; such diseases are a blessing com-



pared to those moral distempers which must be engendered, when immature minds, fermenting with unsound principles, are sent forth into the community. The prevailing argument, in favor of the subdivision of districts, has been the inconvenience of sending small children, great distances, to school. The new law remedies this difficulty. It allows the continuation of existing districts for the small scholars, while it invites the union of two or more of them for the accommodation of the larger ones. As the benefits of this arrangement are set forth in my supplementary Report to the Board of Education, on schoolhouses, (pp. 467-469) I need not dwell upon them here. On reference to that report, it will be seen that the advantages to the older scholars, attending the union or central school, will be more than doubled, at a diminished expense. Nor will the benefits of this arrangement, to the small children, be less, — particularly because it will secure to them the more congenial influences of female teaching.

I believe there will soon be an entire unanimity in public sentiment in regarding female as superior to male teaching for young children. As a plain man of excellent sense once said to me, "A woman will find out where a child's mind is, quickest." I may add, that she will not only find where a child's mind is, more quickly than a man would do, but she will follow its movements more readily; and, if it has gone astray, she will lead it back into the right path more gently and kindly.

Under our present system, the proportion of the female to the male teachers, in our public schools, is about as three to two. This disparity of numbers may be increased with advantage to all, both as to quantity and quality of instruction. It is also universally known that there is, in our community, a vast amount of female talent, of

generous, philanthropic purpose, now unappropriated. It lies waste and dormant for want of some genial sphere of exercise ; and its possessors are thereby half driven, from mere vacuity of mind, and the irritation of unemployed faculties, to the frivolities and despicableness of fashion, to silly amusements, or to reading silly books, merely to kill time, which, properly understood, means killing one's self. I trust there are many noble-minded young women amongst us, whose souls are impatient of a degradation to that idleness and uselessness to which false notions of rank and wealth would consign them ; and who would rejoice, in some form, either as public servants or as private benefactors, to enter this sphere of useful, beneficent employment. As the tone of society now is, the daughters of the poor do not suffer more from a want of the comforts and the refinements of life than the daughters of the rich do, from never knowing or feeling what the high destinies of woman are. But it is beginning to be perceived that the elevation of the character, the condition and the social rank of the female sex, produced by Christianity and other conspiring causes, has, by conferring new privileges, also imposed new duties upon them.

In reference to this topic, I wish it to be considered more deeply than it has ever yet been, whether there be not, in truth, a divinely appointed ministry for the performance of the earlier services in the sacred temple of education. Is there not an obvious, constitutional difference of temperament between the sexes, indicative of a pre-arranged fitness and adaptation, and making known to us, as by a heaven-imparted sign, that woman, by her livelier sensibility and her quicker sympathies, is the fore-chosen guide and guardian of children of a tender age ? After a child's mind has acquired some toughness and in-

duration, by exposure for a few years to the world's hardening processes, then let it be subjected to the firmer grasp, to the more forcible, subduing power of masculine hands. But when the infant spirit, which even too rude an embrace would wound, is first ushered into this sharp and thorny life, let whatever the gross earth contains of gentleness, of ethereal delicacy, of loving tenderness, be its welcomer, and cherish it upon its halcyon bosom, and lead it as by still waters. And why should woman, lured by a false ambition to shine in courts or to mingle in the clashing tumults of men, ever disdain this sacred and peaceful ministry? Why, renouncing this serene and blessed sphere of duty, should she ever lift up her voice in the thronged market-places of society, higgling and huckstering to barter away that divine and acknowledged superiority *in sentiment* which belongs to her own sex, to extort confessions from the other, of a mere equality *in reason*? Why, in self-debasement, should she ever strive to put off the sublime affections and the ever-beaming beauty of a seraph, that she may clothe a coarser, though it should be a stronger spirit, in the stalwart limbs and hugeness of a giant? Nature declares that whatever has the robustness of the oak, shall have its ruggedness also. To no portion of her works has she at once given pre-eminence both in strength and in grace. If the intellect of woman, like that of man, has the sharpness and the penetrancy of iron and of steel, it must also be as cold and as hard. No! but to breathe pure and exalted sentiments into young and tender hearts, — to take the censers which Heaven gives, and kindle therein the incense which Heaven loves, — this is her high and holy mission. To be the former of wise and great minds, is as much more noble than to be wise and great, as the creative is higher

than the created. In camps or senates, she could shine but for a day, and with a fitful light ; but if, with enduring patience and fidelity, she fulfils her sacred duties to childhood, then, from the sanctuary of her calm and sequestered life, there will go forth a refulgent glory to irradiate all countries and all centuries. The treasures of virtue are self-perpetuating and self-increasing, and when she gathers them into young hearts, to grow with their growth and strengthen with their strength, she makes Time so rich an almoner, that though he goes strewing and scattering his blessings over the earth and over the ages, yet he will never be impoverished, but only so much the more abound. The loftiest spirits, the finest geniuses of pagan antiquity passed by the gods of the deep and full-flowing river with moderated reverence, but, nicely true to a moral and a religious instinct, they bore their richest offerings and paid their deepest homage to the goddess who presided at the fountain.

But amongst all the auspicious events of the past year, ought not the friends of popular education to be most grateful, on account of the offer made by a private gentleman\* to the Legislature, of the sum of ten thousand dollars, upon the conditions that the State should add thereto an equal sum, and that the amount should be expended, under the direction of the Board of Education, in qualifying teachers for our Common Schools, and of the promptness and unanimity with which the Legislature acceded to the proposition ? I say, the *unanimity*, for the vote was entirely unanimous in the House of Representatives, and there was but one *nay* in the Senate. Vast donations have been made in this Commonwealth, both by the government and by individuals, for the cause of learning in some of its higher, and, of course, more lim-

\* Hon. Edmund Dwight, of Boston.

ited departments ; but I believe this to be the first instance where any considerable sum has been given for the cause of education, generally, and irrespective of class, or sect, or party. Munificent donations have frequently been made, amongst ourselves, as well as in other States and countries, to perpetuate some distinctive theory or dogma of one's own, or to requite a peculiar few who may have honored or flattered the giver. But this was given to augment the common mass of intelligence, and to promote universal culture ; it was given with a high and enlightened disregard of all local, party, personal or sectional views ; it was given for the direct benefit of all the heart and all the mind, *extant, or to be extant*, in our beloved Commonwealth ; and, in this respect, it certainly stands out almost, if not absolutely alone, both in the amount of the donation, and in the elevation of the motive that prompted it. I will not tarnish the brightness of this deed, by attempting to gild it with praise. One of the truest and most impressive sentiments ever uttered by Sir Walter Scott is, however, so appropriate, and forces itself so strongly upon my mind, that I cannot repress its utterance. When that plain and homely Scotch girl, Jeannie Deans, — the highest of all the characters ever conceived by that gifted author, — is pleading her suit before the British queen, — and showing herself therein to be ten times a queen, — she utters the sentiment I refer to : “ But when,” says she, “ the hour of trouble comes to the mind or to the body, and when the hour of death comes, that comes to high and low, then it is na what we hae dune for oursells, but what we hae dune for ithers, that we think on maist pleasantly.”

There is, then, at last, on the part of the government of Massachusetts, a recognition of the expediency of providing means for the special qualification of teachers for

our Common Schools ; or, at least, of submitting that question to a fair experiment. Let us not, however, deceive or flatter ourselves with the belief, that such an opinion very generally prevails, or is very deeply seated. A few, and those, as we believe, best qualified to judge, hold this opinion as an axiom. But this cannot be said of great numbers ; and it requires no prophetic vision to foresee that any plan for carrying out this object, however wisely framed, will have to encounter not only the prejudices of the ignorant, but the hostility of the selfish.

The most momentous practical questions now before our state and country are these : In order to preserve our republican institutions, must not our Common Schools be elevated in character and increased in efficiency ? and, in order to bring our schools up to the point of excellence demanded by the nature of our institutions, must there not be a special course of study and training to qualify teachers for their office ? No other worldly interest presents any question comparable to these in importance. To the more special consideration of the latter, — namely, whether the teachers of our public schools require a special course of study and training to qualify them for their vocation, — I solicit your attention, during the residue of this address.

I shall not here insist upon any particular *mode* of preparation, or of preparation in any particular class of institutions, — whether Normal Schools, special departments in academies, colleges, or elsewhere, — to the exclusion of all other institutions. What I insist upon, is, not the form, but the substance.

In treating this subject, duty will require me to speak of errors and deficiencies, and of the inadequate conceptions now entertained of the true office and mission of a teacher. This is a painful obligation, and in dis-

charging it I am sure I shall not be misunderstood by any candid and intelligent mind. Towards the teachers of our schools, — as a class, — I certainly possess none but the most fraternal feelings. Their want of adequate qualifications is the want of the times, rather than of themselves. Teachers, heretofore, have only been partakers in a general error, — an error in which you and I, my hearers, have been as profoundly lost as they. Let this be their excuse hitherto, and let the ignorance of the past be winked at; but the best service we can now render them, is to take this excuse away, by showing the inadequacy and the unsoundness of our former views. Let all who shall henceforth strive to do better, stand acquitted for past delinquencies; but will not those deserve a double measure of condemnation who shall set themselves in array against measures, which so many wise and good men have approved, — at least until those measures have been fairly tested? When the tree shall have been planted long enough to mature its fruit, then *let it be known by its fruit*.

No one has ever supposed that an individual could build up a material temple, and give it strength, and convenience, and fair proportions, without first mastering the architectural art; but we have employed thousands of teachers for our children, to build up the immortal Temple of the Spirit, who have never given to this divine, educational art, a day nor an hour of preliminary study or attention. How often have we sneered at Dogberry in the play, because he holds that “to read and write comes by nature;” when we ourselves have undertaken to teach, or have employed teachers, whose only fitness for giving instruction, not only in reading and writing, *but in all other things*, has come by nature, if it has come at all; — that is, in exact accordance with Dogberry’s philosophy.

In maintaining the affirmative of this question, — namely, that all teachers do require a special course of study and training, to qualify them for their profession, — I will not higggle with my adversary in adjusting preliminaries. He may be the disciple of any school in metaphysics, and he may hold what faith he pleases, respecting the mind's nature and essence. Be he spiritualist or materialist, it here matters not, — nay, though he should deny that there is any such substance as mind or spirit, at all, I will not stop to dispute that point with him, — preferring rather to imitate the example of those old knights of the tournament, who felt such confidence in the justness of their cause, that they gave their adversaries the advantage of sun and wind. For, whatever the mind may be, in its inscrutable nature or essence, or whether there be any such thing as mind or spirit at all, properly so called, this we have seen and do know, that there come beings into this world, with every incoming generation of children, who, although at first so ignorant, helpless, speechless, — so incapable of all motion, upright or rotary, — that we can hardly persuade ourselves they have not lost their way, and come, by mistake, into the wrong world ; yet, after a few swift years have passed away, we see thousands of these same ignorant and helpless beings, expiating horrible offences in prison cells, or dashing themselves to death against the bars of a maniac's cage ; — others of them, we see, holding “ colloquy sublime,” in halls where a nation's fate is arbitrated, or solving some of the mightiest problems that belong to this wonderful universe ; — and others still, there are, who, by daily and nightly contemplation of the laws of God, have kindled that fire of divine truth within their bosoms, by which they become those moral luminaries whose light shineth from one part of the heavens unto the other. And this amazing change



in these feeble and helpless creatures, — this transfiguration of them for good or for evil, — is wrought by laws of organization and of increase, as certain in their operation, and as infallible in their results, as those by which the skilful gardener substitutes flowers, and delicious fruits, and healing herbs, for briers and thorns and poisonous plants. And as we hold the gardener responsible for the productions of his garden, so is the community responsible for the general character and conduct of its children.

Some, indeed, maintain, — erroneously as we believe, — that a difference in education is the sole cause of all the differences existing among men. They hold that all persons come into the world just alike in disposition and capacity, though they go through it, and out of it, so amazingly diverse. They hold, in short, that if any two men had changed cradles, they would have changed characters and epitaphs; — that, not only does the same quantity of substance or essence go to the constitution of every human mind, but that all minds are of the same quality also, — all having the same powers, and bearing, originally, the same image and superscription, like so many half-dollars struck at the government mint.

But deeply as education goes into the core of the heart and the marrow of the bones, we do not claim for it any such prerogative. There are certain substructures of temperament and disposition, which education finds, at the beginning of its work, and which it can never wholly annul. Nor does it comport with the endless variety and beauty manifested in all other parts of the Creator's works, to suppose that he made all ears and eyes to be delighted with the same tunes and colors; or provided so good an excuse for plagiarism, as that all minds were made to think the same thoughts. This inherent and

original diversity, however, only increases the difficulty of education, and gives additional force to the argument for previous preparation; for, were it true that all children are born just alike, in disposition and capacity, the only labor would be to discover the right method for educating a single child, and to stereotype it for all the rest.

This, however, we must concede to those who affirm the original equality and exact similitude of all minds; — namely, that all minds have the same elementary or constituent faculties. This is all that we mean when we say that human nature is everywhere the same. This is, in part, what the Scriptures mean when they say, “God hath made of one blood all nations of men.” The contrasts among men result, not from the possession of a different number of original faculties, but from possessing the same faculties, in different proportions, and in different degrees of activity. The civilized men of the present day, have neither more nor less faculties, *in number*, than their barbarian ancestors had. If so, it would be interesting to ascertain about what year, or century, a new good faculty was given to the race, or an old bad one was taken away. An assembly of civilized men, on this side of the globe, convening to devise measures for diminishing the number of capital crimes, and thus to reduce the number of capital punishments, were *born* with the same number and kind of faculties, — though doubtless differing greatly in proportion and in activity, — with a company of Battas islanders, on the opposite side of the globe, who, perhaps at the same time, may be going to attend the holiday rites of a public execution, and, as is their wont, *to dine on the criminal*. As each human face has the same number of features, each human body the same number of limbs, muscles, organs, &c., so each human soul has the same capacities of Reason, Conscience, Hope, Fear, Love, Self-love, &c.

The differences lie in the relative strength and supremacy of these powers. The human eye is composed of about twenty distinct parts or pieces ; yet these constituent parts are so differently arranged that one man is far-sighted, another near-sighted. When an oculist has mastered a knowledge of one eye, he knows the general plan upon which all eyes have been formed ; but he must still learn the peculiarities of each, or, in his practice, he will ruin all he touches.\* When a surgeon, or an assassin, knows where one man's heart is, he knows, substantially, where the hearts of all other men may be found. And so of the mind and its faculties. It is because of this community of original endowments, that all the great works of nature and art and science, address a common susceptibility or capacity, existing in all minds. It is because of this kindred nature that the same earth is given to us all, as a common residence. The possession by each of his complement of powers and susceptibilities, confers the common nature, while the different portions or degrees in which they exist, and the predominance of one or a few over the others, break us up into moral and intellectual classes. It is impossible to vindicate the propriety of making or of carrying a Revelation to the whole human race, unless that race has common capacities and wants to which the revelation is adapted. And hence we learn the appalling truth, — a truth which should strike “loud on the heart as thunder on the ear,” — that every child born into this

\* I have heard that distinguished surgeon, Dr. John C. Warren, of Boston, relate the following anecdote, which happened to him in London: — Being invited to witness a very difficult operation upon the human eye, by a celebrated English oculist, he was so much struck by the skill and science which were exhibited by the operator, that he sought a private interview with him, to inquire by what means he had become so accomplished a master of his art. “Sir,” said the oculist, “I spoiled a hat-full of eyes to learn it.” Thus it is with incompetent teachers; they may spoil schoolrooms-full of children to learn how to teach, — and perhaps may not always learn even then.

world has tendencies and susceptibilities pointing to the furthest extremes of good and evil. Each one has the capacity of immeasurable virtue or vice. As each body has an immensity of natural space open all around it, so each spirit, when waked into life, has an immensity of moral space open all around it. Each soul has a pinion by which it may soar to the highest empyrean, or swoop downwards to the Tartarean abyss. In the feeblest voice of infancy, there is a tone which can be made to pour a sweeter melody into the symphonies of angels, or thunder a harsher discord through the blasphemies of demons. To plume these wings for an upper or a nether flight; to lead these voices forth into harmony or dissonance; to woo these beings to go where they should go, and to be what they should be, — does it, or does it not, my friends, require some knowledge, some anxious forethought, some enlightening preparation?

You must pardon me, if, on this subject, I speak to you with great plainness; and you must allow me to appeal directly to your own course of conduct in other things. You have property to be preserved for the support of your children while you live, or, when you die, for their patrimony; you have health and life to be guarded and continued, that they may not be bereaved of their natural protectors; — and you have the children themselves, with their unbounded, unfathomable capacities of happiness and misery. Now, in respect to your property, what is it your wont to do, when a young lawyer comes into the village, erects his sign, and, (the most unexclusive of men,) gives to the public a general invitation? Though he has a diploma from a college, and the solemn approval of bench and bar, yet how warily do the public approach him. How much he is reconnoitred before he is retained. How many premeditated plans are laid to appear to meet

him accidentally, to talk over indifferent subjects with him, — the weather, the crops, or Congressional matters, — in order to measure him, and probe him, and see if there be any hopefulness in him. And should all things promise favorably, the young attorney is intrusted, in the first instance, only with some outlawed note, or some doubtful account, before a justice of the peace. No man ever thinks of trusting a case which involves the old homestead, to his inexperienced hands. He would as soon set fire to it.

So, too, of a young physician. No matter from what medical college, home or foreign, he may bring his credentials. From day to day the neighbors watch him without seeming to look at him. In good-wives' parties, the question is confidentially discussed, whether, in a case of exigency, it would be safe to send for him. And when, at last, he is gladdened with a call, it is only to look at some surface ailment, or to *pother* a little about the extremities. Nobody allows him to lay his unpractised hand upon the vitals. Now this common sentiment, — this common practice of mankind, — is only the instinctive dictate of prudence. It is only a tacit recognition of a truth felt by all sensible men, that there are a thousand ways to do a thing wrong, but only one to do it right. And if it be but reasonable to exercise such vigilance and caution, in selecting a healer for our bodies which perish, or a counsellor for our worldly estates, who shall assign limits to the circumspection and fidelity with which the teachers of our children should be chosen, who, in the space of a few short years, or even months, will determine, as by a sort of predestination, upon so much of their future fortunes and destiny?

Again; it is the universal sense of mankind, that skill and facility, in all other things, depend upon study and

practice. We always demand more, where opportunities have been greater. We stamp a man with inferiority, though he does *ten* times better than another, if he has had *twenty* times the advantages. We know that a skilful navigator will carry a vessel through perilous straits, in a gale of wind, and save cargo and lives; while an ignorant one will wreck both, in a broad channel. With what a song of delight we have all witnessed, how easily and surely that wise and good man, at the head of a great institution in our own State, will tame the ferocity of the insane; and how, when each faculty of a fiery spirit bursts away like an affrighted steed from its path, this mighty tamer of madmen will temper and quell their wild impetuosity and restore them to the guidance of reason. Nay, the great moral healer can do this, not to one only, but to hundreds at a time; while, even in a far shorter period than he asks to accomplish such a wonderful work, an ignorant and passionate teacher will turn a hundred gentle, confiding spirits into rebels and anarchists. And, my hearers, we recognize the existence of these facts, we apply these obvious principles, to every thing but to the education of our children.

Why cannot we derive instruction even from the folly of those wandering show-men who spend a life in teaching brute animals to perform wonderful feats? We have all seen, or at least we have all heard of, some learned horse, or learned pig, or learned dog. Though the superiority over their fellows, possessed by these brute prodigies, may have been owing, in some degree, to the possession of greater natural parts, yet it must be mainly attributed to the higher competency of their instructor. Their teacher had acquired a deeper insight into their natures; his sagacious practice had discovered the means by which their talents could be unfolded and brought out. How-

ever unworthy and even contemptible, therefore, the mere trainer of a dog may be, yet he illustrates a great principle. By showing us the superiority of a well-trained dog, he shows what might be the superiority of a well-trained child. He shows us that higher acquisitions, — what may be called academical attainments, — in a few favored individuals of the canine race, are not so much the results of a more brilliant genius on the part of the dog-pupil, as they are the natural reward and consequence of his enjoying the instructions of a professor who has concentrated all his energies upon dog-teaching.

Surely, it will not be denied that a workman should understand two things in regard to the subject-matter of his work; — *first*, its natural properties, qualities, and powers; and *secondly*, the means of modifying and regulating them, with a view to improvement. In relation to the mechanic arts, this is admitted by all. Everybody knows that the strength of the blow must be adjusted to the malleability of the metal. It will not do to strike glass and flint, either with the same force or with the same implements; and the proper instrument will never be selected by a person ignorant of the purpose to be effected by its use. If a man working on wood, mistakes it for iron, and attempts to soften it in the fire, his product is — ashes. And so if a teacher supposes a child to have but one tendency, and one adaptation, when he has many; — if a teacher treats a child as though his nature were wholly animal, or wholly intellectual, or wholly moral and religious, he disfigures and mutilates the nature of that child, and wrenches his whole structure into deformity.

The being *Man* is more complex and diversified in constitution, and more variously endowed in faculties, than any other earthly work of the Creator. It is in this assemblage of powers and prerogatives that his strength

and majesty reside. They constitute his sovereignty and lordship over the creation around him. By our bodily organization we are adapted to the material world in which we are placed ;— our eye to the light, which makes known to us every change in the form, motion, color, position, of all objects within visual range ;— our ear and tongue to the air, which flows around us in silence, yet is forever ready to be waked into voice and music ;— our hand to all the cunning works of art which subserve utility or embellishment. Still more wonderfully does the spiritual nature of man befit his spiritual relations. Whatever there is of law, of order, of duty, in the works of God, or in the progressive conditions of the race, all have their spiritual counterparts within him. By his perceptive and intellectual faculties, he learns the properties of created things, and discovers the laws by which they are governed. By tracing the relation between causes and effects, he acquires a kind of prophetic vision and power ; for, by conforming to the unchanging laws of Nature, he enlists her in his service, and she works with him in fulfilling his predictions. Regarded as an individual, and as a member of a race which reproduces itself and passes away, his lower propensities, — those which he holds in common with the brutes, — are the instincts and means to preserve himself and to perpetuate his kind ; while by his tastes, and by the social, moral, and religious sentiments of which he is capable, he is attuned to all the beauties and sublimities of creation, his heart is made responsive to all the delights of friendship and domestic affection, and he is invited to hold that spiritual intercourse with his Maker, which at once strengthens and enraptures.

Now the voice of God and of Nature declares audibly which of these various powers within us are to command,



and which are to obey ; and with which, in every questionable case, resides the ultimate arbitrament. Even the lowest propensities are not to be wholly extirpated. Within the bounds prescribed by the social and the divine law, they have their rightful claims. But the moral and the religious sentiments,—Benevolence, Conscience,—Reverence for the All-creating and All-bestowing Power, these have the prerogative of supremacy and absolute dominion. These are to walk the halls of the soul, like a god, nor suffer rebellion to live under their eye. Yet how easy for this many-gifted being to fall,—more easy, indeed, because of his many gifts. Some subject-faculty, some subordinate power, in this spiritual realm, unfortunately inflamed, or,—what is far more common,—unwisely stimulated by an erroneous education, grows importunate, exorbitant, aggrandizes itself, encroaches upon its fellow-faculties, until, at last, obtaining the mastery, it subverts the moral order of the soul, and wages its parricidal war against the sovereignty of conscience within, and the laws of society and Heaven without. And how unspeakably dreadful are the retributions which come in the train of these remorseless usurpers, when they obtain dominion over the soul ! Take, for instance, the earliest-developed, the most purely selfish and animal appetite that belongs to us,—that for nourishing beverage. It is the first which demands gratification after birth. Subjected to the laws of temperance, it will retain its zest, fresh and genial, for threescore years and ten, and it affords the last corporal solace upon earth to the parched lips of the dying man. Yet, if the possessor of this same pleasure-giving appetite shall be incited, either by examples of inordinate indulgence, or by festive songs in praise of the vine and the wine-cup, to inflame it, and to feed its deceitful fires, though but for the space of a few short years, then the

spell of the sorcerer will be upon him ; and, day by day, he will go and cast himself into the fiery furnace which he has kindled ; — nor himself, the pitiable victim, alone, but he will seize upon parents and wife and his group of innocent children, and plunge with them all into the seething hell of intemperance.

So there is, in human nature, an innate desire of acquiring property, — of owning something, — of using the possessives *my* and *mine*. Within proper limits, this instinct is laudably indulged. Its success affords a pleasure in which reason can take a part. It stimulates and strengthens many other faculties. It makes us thoughtful and forethoughtful. It is the parent of industry and frugality, — and industry and frugality, as we all know, are blood-relations to the whole family of the virtues. But to the eye and heart of one in whom this love of acquisition has become absorbing and insane, all the diversified substances in creation are reduced to two classes, — that which is gold, and that which is not ; — and all the works of Nature are valued or despised, and the laws and institutions of society upheld or assailed, as they are supposed to be favorable or unfavorable to the acquisition of wealth. Whether at home or abroad, in the festive circle or in the funeral train ; whether in hearing the fervid and thrilling appeals of the sanctuary, or the pathos of civic eloquence, one idea alone, — that of money, money, money, — holds possession of the miser's soul ; its voice rings forever in his ear ; and were he in the garden of Eden, — its beauty, and music, and perfume suffusing all his senses, — his only thought would be, how much money it would bring ! Such mischief comes from giving supremacy to a subordinate, though an essential and highly useful faculty. This mischief, to a greater or less extent, parents and teachers produce, when, through an ignorance

of the natural and appropriate methods of inducing children to study, they hire them to learn by the offer of pecuniary rewards.

So, too, we all have an innate love for whatever is beautiful;—a sentiment that yearns for higher and higher degrees of perfection in the arts, and in the embellishments of life,—a feeling which would prompt us to “gild refined gold, to paint the lily, to throw a perfume on the violet, and add another hue unto the rainbow.” Portions of the external world have been exquisitely adapted to this inborn love of the beautiful, by Him who has so clothed the lilies of the field that they outshine Solomon in all his glory. This sentiment may be too much or too little cultivated;—so little as to make us disdain gratifications that are at once innocent and pure; or so much as to over-refine us into a hateful fastidiousness. In the works of nature, beauty is generally, if not always, subordinated to utility. In cases of incompatibility, gracefulness yields to strength, not strength to gracefulness. How would the rising sun mock us with his splendor, if he brought no life or warmth in his beams! The expectation of autumnal harvests enhances the beauty of vernal bloom. These manifestations of nature admonish us respecting the rank which ornament or accomplishment should hold in the character and in the works of men; and, of course, in the education of children. Christ referred *occasionally* to the beauties and charms of nature, but dwelt *perpetually* upon the obligations of duty and charity. But what opposite and grievous offences are committed on this subject by different portions of society! The laboring classes, by reason of early parental neglect in cultivating a love for the beautiful, often forego pleasures which a bountiful Providence scatters profusely and gratuitously around them, and strews beneath their feet; while there is a class

of persons at the other extremity of the social scale, who, from never comprehending the immeasurable value of the objects for which they were created, and the vast beneficence of which, from their wealth and station, they are capable, actually try every thing, however intrinsically noble or sacred, by some conventional law of fashion, by some arbitrary and capricious standard of elegance. In European society, this class of "fashionables" is numerous. They have their imitators here, — beings, who are not men and women, but similitudes only, — who occupy the vanishing point in the perspective of society, where all that is true, or noble, or estimable in human nature, fades away into nothing. With this class, it is no matter what a man does with the "Ten Commandments," provided he keeps those of Lord Chesterfield; and, in their society, Beau Brummell would take precedence of Dr. Franklin.

In a Report lately made by the Agricultural Commissioner for the survey of this Commonwealth, I noticed a statement respecting some farmers in the northern part of the County of Essex, who attempted to raise sun-flowers for the purpose of extracting oil from the seeds. Twenty bushels to the acre was the largest crop raised by any one. Six bushels of the seed yielded but one gallon of oil, worth, in the market, one dollar and seventeen cents only. It surely required no great boldness to assert that the experiment did not succeed: — cultivation, one acre; product, three gallons of oil; value, three dollars and fifty cents! — which would, perhaps, about half repay the cost of labor. Woe to the farmer who seeks for independence by raising sun-flowers! Ten times woe to the parents who rear up sun-flower sons or sun-flower daughters, — instead of sons whose hearts glow and burn with immortal zeal to run the noble career of usefulness

and virtue which a happy fortune has laid open before them ; — instead of daughters who cherish such high resolves of duty as lift them even above an enthusiasm for greatness, into those loftier and serene regions where greatness comes not from excitement, but is native, and ever-springing and ever-abiding. Every son, whatever may be his expectations as to fortune, ought to be so educated that he can superintend some part of the complicated machinery of social life ; and every daughter ought to be so educated that she can answer the claims of humanity, whether those claims require the labor of the head or the labor of the hand. Every daughter ought to be so trained that she can bear, with dignity and self-sustaining ability, those revolutions in Fortune's wheel, which sometimes bring the kitchen up and turn the parlor down.

Again : we have a natural, spontaneous feeling of self-respect, an innate sense that, simply in our capacity as human beings, we are worth something, and entitled to some consideration. This principle constitutes the interior frame-work of some of the virtues, veiled, indeed, by their own beautiful covering, but still necessary in order to keep them in an erect posture, amidst all the overbearing currents and forces of the world. Where this feeling of self-respect exists too weakly, the whole character becomes limber, flaccid, impotent, sinks under the menace of opposition, and can be frightened out of any thing or into any thing. On the other hand, when this propensity aggrandizes itself, and becomes swollen and deformed with pride, and conceit, and intolerance, it is a far more offensive nuisance than many of those which the law authorizes us to abate, summarily, by force and arms. Our political institutions are a rich alluvium for the growth of self-esteem ; for, while everybody knows

that there are the greatest differences between men in point of honesty, of ability, of will to do good and to promote right, yet our fundamental laws, — and rightly too, — ordain a political equality. But what is not right is, that the political equality is the fact mainly regarded, while there is a tendency to disregard the intellectual and moral inequalities. And thus a faculty, designed to subserve, and capable of subserving the greatest good, engenders a low ambition, and fills the land with the war-whoop of party strife.

These are specimens only of a long list of original tendencies or attributes of the human mind, from a more full enumeration and exposition of which, I must, on this occasion, refrain. But have not enough been referred to, to authorize us to assert the general doctrine, that every teacher ought to have some notions, clear, definite, and comprehensive, of the manifold powers, — the various nature, — of the beings confided to his hands, so that he may repress the redundancy of a too luxuriant growth, and nourish the feeble with his fostering care? No idea can be more erroneous than that children go to school to learn the rudiments of knowledge only, and not to form character. The character of children is always forming. No place, no companion, is without an influence upon it; and at school it is formed more rapidly than anywhere else. The mere fact of the presence of so many children together, puts the social or dissocial nature of each into fervid action. To be sent to school, especially in the country, is often as great an event in a child's life, as it is, in his father's, to be sent to the General Court; and we all know with what unwonted force all things affect the mind, in new places and under new circumstances. Every child, too, when he first goes to school, understands that he is put upon his good behavior; and, with

man or child, it is a very decisive thing, and reaches deep into character and far into futurity, when put upon his good behavior, to prove recreant. Now, teachers take children under their care, as it were, *during the first warm days* of the spring of life, when more can be done towards directing their growth and modifying their dispositions, than can be done in years, at a later season of their existence.

Equally indispensable is it, that every teacher should know by what means, — by virtue of what natural laws, — the human powers and faculties are strengthened or enfeebled. There is a principle running through every mental operation, — without a knowledge of which, without a knowledge how to apply which, the life of the most faithful teacher will be only a succession of well-intentioned errors. The growth or decline of all our powers depends upon a steadfast law. There is no more chance in the processes of their growth or decay than there is in the Multiplication Table. They grow by exercise, and they lose tone and vigor by inaction. All the faculties have their related objects, and they grow by being excited to action through the stimulus or instrumentality of those objects. Each faculty, too, has its own set or class of related objects; and the classes of related objects differ as much from each other, as do the corresponding faculties which they naturally excite. If any one power or faculty, therefore, is to be strengthened, so as to perform its office with facility, precision and despatch, that identical faculty, — not any other one, — must be exercised. It does not strengthen my left arm to exercise my right; and this is just as true of the powers of the mind, as of the organs of the body. The whole pith of that saying of Solomon, "Train up a child in the way he should go," consists in this principle, because "to

train " means to drill, to repeat, to do the same thing over and over again, — that is, *to exercise*. Solomon does not say, "*Tell* a child the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it." Had he said this, we could refute him daily by ten thousand facts. Unfortunately, education amongst us, at present, consists too much in *telling*, not in *training*, on the part of parents and teachers; and, of course, in *hearing*, not in *doing*, on the part of children and pupils. The blacksmith's right arm, the philosopher's intellect, the philanthropist's benevolence, all grow and strengthen according to this law of exercise. The farmer *works* solid flesh upon his cattle; the pugilist *strikes* vigor into his arms and breast; the foot soldier *marches* strength into his limbs; the practical man *thinks* quickness and judgment into his mind; and the true Christian *lives* his prayers of love and his thoughts of mercy, until every man becomes his brother. Our own experience and observation furnish us with a life-full of evidence attesting this principle. How did our feet learn to walk, our fingers to write, our organs of speech to utter an innumerable variety of sounds? By what means does the musician pass from coarse discords to perfect music, — from hobbling and shambling in his measure, to keeping time like a chronometer, — from a slow and timid touch of keys or chords, to such celerity of movement, that, though his will sends out a thousand commands in a minute, his nimble fingers obey them all? It is this exercise, this repetition, which gives to jugglers their marvellous dexterity. By dint of practice, their motions become quicker than our eyesight, and thus elude inspection. A knowledge of this principle solves many of the riddles of life, by showing us whence comes the domineering strength of human appetites and passions. It comes



from exercise, — from a long indulgence of them in thought and act, — until the offspring of sinful desire turn back, and feast upon the vitals of the wretch who nurtured them. It is this which makes the miser pant and raven for gain, more and more, just in proportion to the shortness of the life during which he can enjoy it. It is this which sends the drunkard to pay daily tribute to his own executioner. It is this which scourges back the gambler to the hell he dreads.

It is by this law of exercise that the perceptive and reflective intellect, — I mean the powers of observing and judging, — are strengthened. If, therefore, in the education of the child, the action of these powers is early arrested ; if his whole time is engrossed and his whole energy drawn away, by other things ; or, if he is not supplied with the proper objects or apparatus on which these faculties can exert themselves, — then the after-life of such a child will be crowded with practical errors and misjudgments. As a man, his impressions of things will be faint and fleeting ; he will never be able to describe an object as he saw it, nor to tell a story as he heard it. No handicrafts-man or mechanic ever becomes what we call a first-rate workman, until after innumerable experiments and judgments, — that is, repetitions, or exercises. And the rule is the same even with genius, — artisan or artist, he must practise long and sedulously upon lines, proportions, reliefs, before he can become the first sculptor of the age, or the first boot-maker in the city. The teacher, then, must continue to exercise the powers of his pupils, until he secures accuracy even in the minutest things he teaches. Every child can and should learn to judge, almost with mathematical exactness, how long an inch is ; — no matter if he does not guess within a foot of it the first time. Whether the story of Casper

Hauser be true or not, it has verisimilitude, and is therefore instructive. It warns us what the general result must be, if, by a non-presentation of their related objects, the faculties of a child are not brought into exercise. We meet with persons, every day, who, in regard to some one or more of the faculties, are Casper Hausers. This happens, almost universally, not through any natural defect, but because parents and teachers have been ignorant, either of the powers to be exercised, or of the related objects through whose instrumentality they can be excited to action.

But here arises a demand for great skill, aptitude and resources, on the part of the teacher ; for, by continuing to exercise the same faculty, I do not mean a monotonous repetition of the same action, nor a perpetual presentation of the same object or idea. Such a course would soon cloy and disgust, and thus terminate all effort in that direction. Would a child ever learn to dance, if there were but one figure ; or to sing, if there were but one tune ? Nature, science, art, offer a boundless variety of objects and processes, adapted to quicken and employ each of the faculties. These resources the teacher should have at his command, and should make use of them, in the order, and for the period, that each particular case may require. Look into the shops of our ingenious artisans and mechanics, and see their shining rows of tools, — hundreds in number, — but each adapted to some particular process in their curious art. Look into the shop or hut of a savage, an Indian mechanic, and you will find his chest of tools composed of a single jack-knife ! So with our teachers. Some of them have apparatus, diagram, chart, model ; they have anecdote, epigram, narrative, history, by which to illustrate every branch of study, and to fit every variety of disposition ;

while the main resource of others, for all studies, for all ages and for all dispositions, is — the rod !

Again ; a child must not only be exercised into correctness of observation, comparison and judgment, but into accuracy in the narration or description of what he has seen, heard, thought or felt, so that, whatever thoughts, emotions, memories, are within him, he can present them all to others in exact and luminous words. Dr. Johnson said, "Accustom your children constantly to this ; if a thing happened at one window, and they, when relating it, say that it happened at another, do not let it pass, but instantly check them. You do not know where deviation from the truth will end." Every man who sees effects in causes, will fully concur with the Doctor in regard to the value of such a habit of accuracy as is here implied. If, in the narration of an event, or in the recitation of a lesson, a child is permitted to begin at the last end of it, and to scatter the middle about promiscuously, depend upon it, if that child, after growing up, is called into court as a witness, somebody will suffer in fortune, in reputation, or perhaps in life. When practising at the bar, I was once engaged in an important case of slander, where the whole question of the innocence or guilt of the defendant turned upon the point, whether, at a certain time, he was seen out of one window, or out of another ; and the stupid witness first swore that it was one window, then another window, and at last, thought it might be a door ; and doubtless, he could have been made to swear that he saw him through the sky-light. Would you appreciate the importance of accuracy, in observation and statement, take one of those cases which so frequently occur in our courts of law, where a dozen witnesses, — all honest, — swear one way, and another dozen, — equally honest, —

counter-swear ; and contrast it with a case, which so rarely occurs, where a witness, whose mind, like a copying machine, having taken an exact impression of whatever it has seen or heard, attests to complicated facts, in a manner so orderly, luminous, natural, — giving to each, time, locality, proportion, that when he has finished, every auditor, — bench, bar, spectators, — all feel as though they had been personally present and witnessed the whole transaction. Now, although something of this depends, unquestionably, upon soundness in physical and mental organization, yet a vast portion of it is referable to the early observation or neglect, on the part of teacher or parent, of the law we are considering.

There is another point, too, which the teacher should regard, especially where only a small portion of non-age is appropriated to school attendance. In exercising the faculties for the purpose of strengthening them, the greatest amount of useful knowledge should be communicated. The faculties may be exercised and strengthened in acquiring useful or useless knowledge. A farmer or a stone-mason may exercise and strengthen the muscles of his body, by pitching or rolling timbers or stones, backwards and forwards ; but, by converting the same materials into a house or a fence, he may at once gain strength and do good. Every teacher, at the same time that he exercises the faculties of his pupils, ought to impart the greatest amount of valuable knowledge ; and he should always be above the temptation of keeping a pupil in a lower department of study, because he himself does not understand the higher ; or, on the other hand, of prematurely carrying his pupil into a higher department, because of his own ignorance of the lower. Suppose a bright boy, for instance, to be studying arithmetic and geography, at school. Now, arithmetic cannot be

taught unless it is understood ; but, with the help of an atlas, and a text-book whose margin is all covered with questions, the business of teaching geography may be set up on a very slender capital of knowledge. And here a teacher who is obliged to be very economical of his arithmetic, would be tempted to keep his pupil upon all the small towns, and tiny rivers, and dots of islands in the geography, in order to delay him, and gain time, — like the officers of those banks whose specie runs low, who seek to pay off their creditors in *cents*, because it takes so long to count the copper. Every teacher ought to know vastly more than he is required to teach, so that he may be furnished, on every subject, with copious illustration and instructive anecdote ; and so that the pupils may be disabused of the notion they are so apt to acquire, that they carry all knowledge in their satchels. Every teacher should be possessed of a facility at explanation, — a tact in discerning and solving difficulties, — not to be used too often, for then it would supersede the effort it should encourage, — but when it is used, to be quick and sure as a telescope, bringing distant objects near, and making obscure ones distinct. In the important, but grossly neglected and abused exercise of reading, for instance, every new fact, every new idea, is *news* to the child ; and did he fully understand it, he would be as eager to learn it, as we are to learn what is *news* to us. But how, think you, should we be vexed, if our news-bringer spoke every third word in a foreign language ; or gave us only a Pennsylvania newspaper printed in German, when we wanted to know how their votes stood in an election for President. Whatever words a child does not understand, in his reading lesson, are, to him, words in a foreign language ; and they must be translated into his own language before he can take any interest in them.

But if, instead of being translated into his language, they are left unnoticed, or are translated into another foreign language still, — that is, into other words or phrases of which he is ignorant, — then, the child, instead of delightful and instructive ideas, gets empty words, mere sounds, atmospheric vibrations only. In Dr. Johnson's Dictionary, the word, "*Network*" is defined to be "any thing reticulated or decussated, with interstices between the intersections." Now who, ignorant of the meaning of the word "network," before, would understand it any better by being told, that it is "any thing reticulated or decussated, with interstices between the intersections?" Nor would he be much enlightened, if, on looking farther, he found that the same author had given the following definitions of the defining words: — "reticulated," "*formed with interstitial vacuities*;" — "decussated," "*intersected at acute angles*;" — "interstice," "*space between one thing and another*;" — "intersection," "*point where lines cross each other*." If this is not, as Milton says, "dark with excess of bright," it is, at least, "darkness visible." A few years since, a geography was published in this State, — the preface of which boasted of its adaptation to the capacities of children; — and, on the second page, there was this definition of the words "zenith and nadir:" "zenith and nadir, two Arabic words *importing their own signification*." A few years since, an English traveller and book-maker, who called himself Thomas Ashe, Esq., visited the Big Bone Licks, in Kentucky, where he found the remains of the mammoth, in great abundance, and whence he carried away several wagon-loads of bones. In describing the size of one of the shoulder-blades of that animal, he says, it "*was about as large as a breakfast-table!*" A child's mind may be dark and ignorant before, but, under such

explanations as these, darkness will coagulate, and ignorance be sealed in hermetically. Let a school be so conducted but for one season, and all life will be abstracted from it; and it will become the painful duty of the school committee, at its close, to attend a *post mortem* examination of the children, without even the melancholy satisfaction of believing that science will be benefited by the horrors of the dissection.

Every teacher should be competent to some care of the health of his pupils, — not merely for the purpose of regulating the temperature of the schoolroom, and, of course, the transition which the scholars must undergo, on entering or leaving it, — though this is of no small importance, — but so that, as occasion offers, he may inculcate a knowledge of some of the leading conditions upon which health and life depend. I saw, last year, in the public town school of Northampton, — under the care of Mr. R. M. Hubbard, — more than a hundred boys, from ten or eleven to fifteen or sixteen years of age, who pointed out the place and gave the name of all the principal bones in their bodies, as well as an anatomist would have done; who explained the physiological processes of the circulation of the blood and the alimentation of food, and described the putrefactive action of ardent spirits upon the delicate tissues of the stomach. Now such boys have a chance, nay, a certainty, of far longer life and far better health, than they would otherwise have; and as they grow up, they will be far less easily tempted to emulate either of the three cockney graces, — Gin, Swearing and Tobacco.

But I must pass by other considerations, respecting the growth and invigoration of the intellectual faculties, and the classes of subjects upon which they should be employed. I hasten to the consideration of another topic, incalculably more important.

The moral faculties increase or decline, strengthen or languish, by the same law of exercise. In legislating for men, *actions* are mainly regarded ; but in the education of children, *motives are every thing*, MOTIVES ARE EVERY THING. All, this side of the motive, is mere mechanism, and it matters not whether it be done by the hand, or by a crank. There was profound philosophy in the old theological notion, that whoever made a league with the devil, in order to gratify a passion through his help, became the devil's property afterwards. And so, when a teacher stimulates a child to the performance of actions, externally right, by appealing to motives intrinsically wrong, he sells that child into bondage to the wrong motive. Some parents, finding a desire of luxurious food a stronger motive-power in their children than any other, accomplish every thing through its means. They hire them to go to school and learn, to go to church and remember the text, and to behave well before company, by a promise of dainties. Every repetition of this enfeebles the sentiment of duty, through its inaction, while it increases the desire for delicacies, by its exercise ; and as they successively come into competition afterwards, the virtue will be found to have become weaker, and the appetite stronger. Such parents touch the wrong pair of nerves, — the sensual instead of the moral, the bestial instead of the divine. These springs of action lie at the very extremes of human nature, — one class down among the brutes, the other up among the seraphim. When a child, so educated, becomes a man, and circumstances make him the trustee or fiduciary of the friendless and unprotected, and he robs the widow and orphan to obtain the means of luxury or voluptuousness, we exclaim, "Poor human nature !" and are ready to appoint a Fast ; when the truth is, he was educated to be a knave under



that very temptation. Were a surgeon to operate upon a human body, with as little knowledge of his subject as this, and whip round his double-edged knife where the vital parts lie thickest, he would be tried for manslaughter at the next court, and deserve conviction.

Take another example ; — and I instance one of the motive-forces which, for the last fifty or a hundred years, has been mainly relied on, in our schools, academies and colleges, as the stimulus to intellectual effort ; and which has done more than every thing else, to cause the madness and the profligacy of those political and social rivalries that now convulse the land. Let us take a child who has only a moderate love of learning, but an inordinate passion for praise and place ; and we therefore allure him to study by the enticements of precedence and applause. If he will surpass all his fellows, we advance him to the post, and signalize him with the badges of distinction, and never suffer the siren of flattery to cease the enchantments of her song. If he ever has any compassionate misgivings in regard to the effect which his own promotion may have upon his less brilliant, though not less meritorious fellow-pupils, then we seek to withdraw his thoughts from this virtuous channel, and to turn them to the selfish contemplation of his own brilliant fortunes in future years ; if waking conscience ever whispers in his ear, that that pleasure is dishonorable which gives pain to the innocent ; then we dazzle him with the gorgeous vision of triumphal honors and applauding multitudes ; — and when, in after-life, this victim of false influences deserts a righteous cause because it is declining, and joins an unrighteous one because it is prospering, and sets his name in history's pillory, to be scoffed and jeered at for ages, then we pour out lamentations, in prose and verse, over the moral sui-

cide! And yet, by such a course of education, he was prepared beforehand, like a skilfully organized machine, to prove a traitor and an apostate at that very conjuncture. No doubt, a college-boy will learn more Greek and Latin if it is generally understood that college-honors are to be mainly awarded for proficiency in those languages; but what care we though a man can speak seven languages, or dreams in Hebrew or Sanscrit, because of their familiarity, if he has never learned the language of sympathy for human suffering, and is deaf when the voice of truth and duty utters their holy mandates? We want men who feel a sentiment, a *consciousness*, of brotherhood for the whole human race. We want men who will instruct the ignorant, — not delude them; who will succor the weak, — not prey upon them. We want men who will fly to the moral breach when the waters of desolation are pouring in, and who will stand there, and, if need be, die there, — applause or no applause. No doubt, every one is bound to take watchful care of that portion of his happiness which rightfully depends upon the good opinion of others; but before any teacher attempts to secure the proficiency of his pupils by inflaming their love of praise and place, ought he not to appeal, with earnest and prolonged entreaty, to every higher sentiment; and even then, should he fail of arousing a desire for improvement, would it not be better to abandon a pupil to mediocrity, or even insignificance, than to insure him the highest eminence by awakening an unholy ambition in his bosom? It is infinitely better for any nation to support a hospital for fools, than to have a parliament or a congress of knaves.

And thus it is with all moral developments. Ignorance may appeal to a wrong motive, and thus give inordinate strength to an inferior sentiment, while honestly

in quest of a right action. For a few times, perhaps even for a few years, the appeal may be successful ; but, by and by, the inferior sentiment or propensity will gain predominance, and usurp the throne, and rule by virtue of its own might.

So, too, a train of circumstances may be prepared, or a system of government adopted, designed by their author for good, yet productive of a venomous brood of feelings. Suppose a teacher attempts to secure obedience by fear, instead of love, but still lacks the energy or the talent requisite for success. Forthwith, and from the necessity of the case, there are two hostile parties in that school, — the teacher with his government to maintain, the pupils with their various and ever-springing desires to gratify, in defiance of that government. Not only will there be revolts and mutinies, revolutions and counter-revolutions, in such a school, but, what is infinitely worse because of its meanness and baseness, there will be generated a moral pestilence of deception and trickery. The boldest spirits, — those already too bold and fool-hardy, — will break out into open rebellion, and thus begin to qualify themselves to become, in after-life, violators and contemners of the laws of society ; while those who are already prone to concealment and perfidy will sharpen their wits for deception ; they will pretend to be saying or doing one thing when saying or doing another ; they will sever the connection between tongue and heart ; they will make the eyes, the face, and all the organs that contribute to the natural language, belie the thoughts ; and, in fine, will turn the whole body into an instrument of dissimulation. Such children, under such management, are every day preparing to become, — not men of frankness, of ingenuousness, of a beautiful transparency of disposition, — but sappers and miners of character, —

men accomplishing all their ends by stratagem and ambush, and as full of guile as the first serpent. Who of us has not seen some individual so secretive and guileful as to be impervious to second-sight, or even to the boasted vision of animal magnetism? I cannot but believe that most of those hateful specimens of duplicity, — I might rather say, of triplicity, or multiplicity, — which we sometimes encounter in society, had their origin in the attempts made in early life to evade commands injudiciously given, or not enforced when given. If any thing pertaining to the education of children demands discretion, prudence, wisdom, it is the commands which we impose upon them. In no case ought a command ever to be issued to a child without a moral certainty either that it will be voluntarily obeyed, or, if resisted, that it can be enforced; because disobedience to superiors, who stand at first in the place of a child's conscience, prepares the way for disobedience to conscience itself, when that faculty is developed. Hence the necessity of discriminating, as a preliminary, between what a child will do, or can be made to do, and the contrary. Hence, when disobedience is apprehended, the issue should be tried rather on a case of prohibition than of injunction, because a child can be deterred when he cannot be compelled. Hence, also, the necessity of discriminating between what a child has the moral power to do, and what it is in vain to expect from him. Take a child who has been brought up luxuriously, indulgently, selfishly, and command him, in the first instance, to incur some great sacrifice for a mere stranger, or for some object which he neither understands nor values; and disobedience is as certain as long days in the middle of June; — I mean the disobedience of the spirit, for fear, perhaps, may secure the performance of the outward act. Such a child knows nothing of

the impulses of conscience, of the joyful emotions that leap up in the heart after the performance of a generous deed ; and it is as absurd to put such a weight of self-denial upon his benevolence, the first time, as it would be to put a camel's load upon his shoulders. Such a child is deeply diseased. He is a moral paralytic. In regard to all benevolent exertion and sacrifice, he is as weak as an infant ; and he can be recovered and strengthened to virtuous resolutions only by degrees. What should we think of a physician, who, the first time his patient emerged from a sick-chamber, — pallid, emaciated, tottering, — should prescribe a match at wrestling, or the running of races ? Yet this would be only a parallel to the mode in which selfish or vicious children are often treated ; nay, some persons prepare or select the most difficult cases, — cases requiring great generosity or moral intrepidity, — by which to break new beginners into the work of benevolence or duty. If, by a bad education, a child has lost all generous affections, (for no child is born without them) ; if he never shares his books or divides his luxuries with his playmates ; if he hides his playthings at the approach of his little visitors ; if his eye never kindles at the recital of a magnanimous deed, — of course I mean one the magnanimity of which he can comprehend, — then he can be won back to kindness and justice only by laborious processes, and in almost imperceptible degrees. In every conversation before such children, generosity and self-denial should be spoken of with a fervor of admiration and a glow of sympathy. Stories should be told or read before them, in which the principal actors are signalized by some of the qualities they delight in, (always provided that no element of evil mingles with them,) and when their attachments are firmly fastened upon hero or heroine, then the social, amia-

ble and elevated sentiments which are deficient in the children themselves, should be developed in the actors or characters whom they have been led to admire. A child may be led to admire qualities on account of their relationships and associations, when he would be indifferent to them if presented separately. If a child is selfish, the occasion for kind acts should be prepared, where all the accompaniments are agreeable. As the sentiment of benevolence gains tone and strength, and begins to realize some of those exquisite gratifications which God, by its very constitution, has annexed to its exercise, then let the collateral inducements be weakened, and the experiments assume more of the positive character of virtue. In this way, a child so selfish and envious as to be grieved even at the enjoyment of others, may be won, at last, to seek for delight in offices of humanity and self-sacrifice. There is always an avenue through which a child's mind can be reached ; the failures come from our want of perseverance and sagacity in seeking it. We must treat moral more as we treat physical distempers. Week after week the mother sits by the sick-bed, and welcomes fasting and vigils ; her watchfulness surrounds her child, and, with all the means and appliances that wealth or life can command, she strives to bar up every avenue through which death can approach him. Did mothers care as much for the virtues and moral habits as for the health and life of their offspring, would they not be as patient, as hopeful, and as long-suffering in administering antidote and remedy to a child who is morally, as to one who is physically, diseased ?

Is it not in the way above described, — after a slowly brightening twilight of weeks, perhaps of months, — that the oculist, at last, lets in the light of the meridian sun upon the couched eye ? Is it not in this way that the

convalescent of a fevered bed advances, from a measured pittance of the weakest nutrition, to that audacious health which spurns at all restraints upon appetite, whether as to quantity or quality? For these healings of the diseased eye or body, we demand the professional skill and science of men educated and trained to the work; nay, if any impostor or empiric wantonly tampers with eye or life, the injured party accuses him, the officers of the law arrest him, the jurors upon their oaths convict him, the judges pass sentence, and the sheriff executes the mandates of the law; — while parties, officers, jurors, judges and sheriffs, with one consent, employ teachers to direct and train the godlike faculties of their children, who never had one hour of special study, who never received one lesson of special instruction, to fit them for their momentous duties.

If, then, the business of education, in all its departments, be so responsible; if there be such liability to excite and strengthen any one faculty of the opening mind, instead of its antagonist; if there be such danger of promoting animal and selfish propensities into command over social and moral sentiments; if it be so easy for an unskilful hand to adjust opportunity to temptation in such a way that the exposed are almost certain to fall; if it be a work of such delicacy and difficulty to reclaim those who have wandered; if, in fine, one, not deeply conversant with the human soul, with all its various faculties and propensities, and with all the circumstances and objects which naturally excite them to activity, is in incomparably greater danger of touching the wrong spring of action, than one, unacquainted with music, is of touching the wrong key or chord of the most complicated musical instrument, — then ought not every one of those who are installed into the sacred office of teacher to be “a

workman who needeth not to be ashamed"? Surely, they should know, beforehand, how to touch the right spring, with the right pressure, at the right time.

There is a terrible disease that sometimes afflicts individuals, by which all the muscles of the body seem to be unfastened from the volitions of the mind, and then, after being promiscuously transposed, to be re-fastened; so that a wrong pair of muscles is attached to every volition. In such a case, the afflicted patient never does the thing he intends to do. If he would walk forwards, his will starts the wrong pair of muscles, and he walks backwards. When he would extend his right arm to shake hands with you, in salutation, he starts the wrong pair of muscles, thrusts out his left, and slaps or punches you. Precisely so is it with the teacher who knows not what faculties of his pupils to exercise, and by what objects, motives, or processes, they can be brought into activity. He is the *will* of the school; they are the *body* which that will moves; and, through ignorance, he is perpetually applying his will to the wrong points. What wonder, then, if, spending day after day in pulling at the wrong pairs of muscles, the teacher involves the school in inextricable disorder and confusion, and, at last, comes to the conviction that they were never made to go right?

But, says an objector, can any man ever attain to such knowledge that he can touch as he should this "harp of a thousand strings"? Perhaps not, I reply; but ask, in my turn, Cannot every man know better than he now does? Cannot something be done to make good teachers better, and incompetent ones less incompetent? Cannot something be done to promote the progress and to diminish the dangers of all our schools? Cannot something be done to increase the intelligence of those female teachers, to whose hands our children are committed in



the earliest and most impressible periods of childhood ; — and thus, in the end, to increase the intelligence of mothers, — for every mother is *ex officio* a member of the College of Teachers ? Cannot something be done, by study, by discussion, by practical observation, — and especially by the institution of Normal Schools, — which shall diffuse both the art and the science of teaching more widely through our community than they have ever yet been diffused ?

My friends, you cannot go for any considerable distance in any direction, within the limits of our beloved Commonwealth, without passing one of those edifices professedly erected for the education of our children. Though rarely an architectural ornament, yet, always, they are a moral beauty, to the land in which we dwell. Enter with me, for a moment, into one of these important, though lowly mansions. Survey those thickly-seated benches. Before us are clustered the children of to-day, the men of to-morrow, the immortals of eternity ! What costly works of art, what splendid galleries of sculpture or of painting, won by a nation's arms, or purchased by a nation's wealth, are comparable, in value, to the treasures we have in these children ? How many living and palpitating nerves come down from parents and friends, and centre in their young hearts ; and, as they shall advance in life, other living and palpitating nerves, which no man can number, shall go out from their bosoms to twine round other hearts, and to feel their throbs of pleasure or of pain, of rapture or of agony ! How many fortunes of others shall be linked with their fortunes, and shall share an equal fate ! As yet, to the hearts of these young beings, crime has not brought in its retinue of fears, nor disappointment its sorrows. Their joys *are* joys, and their hopes more real than our realities ; and, as visions of the

future burst upon their imaginations, their eye kindles, like the young eagle's at the morning sunbeam. Grouping these children into separate circles, and looking forward, for but a few short years, to the fortunes that await them, shall we predict their destiny, in the terrific language of the poet: —

*" These shall the fury passions tear,  
The vultures of the mind,  
Disdainful Anger, pallid Fear,  
And Shame that skulks behind.*

*Ambition this shall tempt to rise,  
Then whirl the wretch from high,  
To bitter Scorn a sacrifice,  
And grinning Infamy.*

*The stings of Falsehood those shall try,  
And hard Unkindness' altered eye  
That mocks the tear it forced to flow;  
And keen Remorse, with blood defiled,  
And moody Madness, laughing wild,  
Amid severest woe."*

Or, concentrating our whole souls into one resolve,—high and prophetically strong,—that our duty to these children *shall be done*, shall we proclaim, in the blessed language of the Saviour: "IT IS NOT THE WILL OF YOUR FATHER WHICH IS IN HEAVEN THAT ONE OF THESE LITTLE ONES SHOULD PERISH" ?



# **LECTURE III.**

**1838.**



## LECTURE III.

### THE NECESSITY OF EDUCATION IN A REPUBLICAN GOVERNMENT.

GENTLEMEN OF THE CONVENTION:—

THE common arguments in favor of Education have been so often repeated, that, in rising to address you on this subject, I feel like appealing to your own judgment and good sense to bear testimony to its worth, rather than attempting to make your convictions firmer, or your feelings stronger, by any attestations of mine.

I hardly need to say, that, by the word *Education*, I mean much more than an ability to read, write, and keep common accounts. I comprehend, under this noble word, such a training of the body as shall build it up with robustness and vigor,—at once protecting it from disease, and enabling it to act, *formatively*, upon the crude substances of Nature,—to turn a wilderness into cultivated fields, forests into ships, or quarries and clay-pits into villages and cities. I mean, also, to include such a cultivation of the intellect as shall enable it to discover those permanent and mighty laws which pervade all parts of the created universe, whether material or spiritual. This is necessary, because, if we act in obedience to these laws, all the resistless forces of Nature become our auxiliaries, and cheer us on to certain prosperity and triumph; but, if we act in contravention or defiance of these laws, then Nature resists, thwarts, baffles us; and, in the end, it is just as certain that she will overwhelm

us with ruin, as it is that God is stronger than man. And, finally, by the term Education, I mean such a culture of our moral affections and religious susceptibilities, as, in the course of Nature and Providence, shall lead to a subjection or conformity of all our appetites, propensities, and sentiments to the will of Heaven.

My friends, is it not manifest to us all, that no individual, unless he has some acquaintance with the lower forms of education, can superintend even the coarsest and most common interests of life, without daily error and daily shame? The general utility of knowledge, also, and the higher and more enduring satisfactions of the intellect, resulting from the discovery and contemplation of those truths with which the material and the spiritual universe are alike filled, impart to this subject a true dignity and a sublime elevation. But, in its office of attempering feelings which otherwise would blast or consume us;—in its authority to say to the clamorous propensities of our nature, “Peace, be still!”—in its auxiliary power to fit us for the endearments of domestic, for the duties of social, and for the sanctity of immortal life;—in its twofold office of enhancing the enjoyment which each one of us may feel in the virtue and happiness of all others, and of increasing the virtue and happiness of all others, to make a larger fund for common enjoyment;—in these high and sacred prerogatives, the cause of education lays claim to our mind and heart and strength, as one of the most efficient instruments prepared by the Creator for the welfare of His creatures, and the honor of Himself.

Take any individual you please, separate him from the crowd of men, and look at him, apart and alone,—like some Robinson Crusoe in a far-off island of the ocean, without any human being around him, with no prospect

of leaving any human being behind him,—and, even in such a solitude, how authoritative over his actions, how decisive of his contemplations and of his condition, are the instructions he received and the habits he formed in early life ! But now behold him as one of the tumultuous throng of men ; observe the wide influences which he exerts upon others,—in the marts of business, in the resorts of pleasure, in the high places of official trust,—and reflect how many of all these influences, whether beneficent or malign, depend upon the education he has received, and you will have another gauge or standard whereby to estimate the importance of our theme. Look at him again, not as a being, coming, we know not whence, alighting for a brief residence upon this earth, and then making his exit through the door of the tomb, to be seen and heard of no more, and leaving no more impression upon society of his ways or works, than the sea-bird leaves upon the surface of the deep, when she stoops from the upper air, dips her breast for a moment in the wave, and then rises again to a viewless height ; but look at him in his relations to posterity, as the father of a family, as a member of a generation which sows those seeds of virtue or vice, that, centuries hence, shall bear fruit or poison ;—look at him as a citizen in a free government, throwing his influence and his vote into one or the other of the scales where peace and war, glory and infamy, are weighed ;—look at him in these relations, and consider how a virtuous or a vicious education tends to fit or to unfit him for them all, and you will catch one more glimpse of the importance of the subject now presented to your consideration. But if we ascend to a still higher point of vision, and,—forgetting the earthly, personal career, and the wide sphere of social influences, and those acts of life which survive life,—fasten our



eyes upon effects which education may throw forward into immortal destinies, it is then that we are awed, amazed, overpowered, by the thought, that we have been created and placed in a system, where the soul's eternal flight may be made higher or lower by those who plume its tender wings and direct its early course. Such is the magnitude, the transcendence of this subject. In a philosophical view, beginning at what point we will, and following the most rigid connection and dependence of cause and effect, of antecedent and consequence, we shall find that education is intimately related to every good, and to every evil, which, as mortal, or as immortal beings, we can desire or dread.

Were a being of an understanding mind and a benevolent heart, to see, for the first time, a peaceful babe reposing in its cradle, or on its mother's breast, and were he to be told, that that infant had been so constituted that every joint and organ in its whole frame might become the rendezvous of diseases and racking pains; that such was its internal structure, that every nerve and fibre beneath its skin might be made to throb with a peculiar torture; that, in the endless catalogue of human disasters, maladies, adversities or shame, there was scarcely one to which it would not be exposed; that, in the whole criminal law of society, and in the more comprehensive and self-executing law of God, there was not a crime which its heart might not at some time will, and its hand perpetrate; that, in the ghastly host of tragic passions, — Fear, Envy, Jealousy, Hate, Remorse, Despair, — there was not one which might not lacerate its soul, and bring down upon it an appropriate catastrophe; — were the benevolent spectator whom I have supposed, to see this environment of ills underlying, surrounding, overhanging their feeble and unconscious

victim, and, as it were, watching to dart forth and seize it, might he not be excused for wishing the newly-created spirit well back again into nonentity?

But we cannot return to nonentity. We have no refuge in annihilation. Creative energy has been exerted. Our first attribute, the vehicle of all our other attributes, — is immortality. We are of indestructible mould. Do what else we please with our nature and our faculties, we cannot annihilate them. Go where we please, self-desertion is impossible. Banished, we may be, from the enjoyment of God, but never from his dominion. There is no right or power of expatriation. There is no neighboring universe to fly to. If we forswear allegiance, it is but an empty form, for the laws by which we are bound do not only surround us, but are in us, and parts of us. Whatsoever other things may be possible, yet to break up or suspend this perpetuity of existence; to elude this susceptibility to pains, at once indefinite in number and indescribable in severity; to silence conscience, or say that it shall not hold dominion over the soul; to sink the past in oblivion; or to alter any of the conditions on which Heaven has made our bliss and our woe to depend, — these things are impossible. Personality has been given us, by which we must refer all sensations, emotions, resolves, to our conscious selves. Identity has been given us, by virtue of which, through whatever ages we exist, our whole being is made a unity. Now, whether curses or blessings, by these conditions of our nature we must stand; for they are appointed to us, by a law higher than Fate, — by the law of God.

Were any one of this assembly to be shipwrecked upon a desert island, — “out of Humanity’s reach,” — would it not be his first act to ascend the nearest eminence and explore his position? Would he not at once strive to

descrie the dangers and the resources by which he might be surrounded? And, if reason, or even an enlightened self-love, constitutes any attribute of our nature, is it any the less our duty, — finding ourselves *to be*, and *to have entered* upon an interminable career of existence, — finding ourselves inwrought and organized with certain faculties and susceptibilities, so that we are necessitated to enjoy pleasure or to suffer pain, and so that neutrality between good and evil is impossible, — is it, I say, any the less our duty and our interest to look around us and within us, and to see what, on the whole, we can best do with this nature and with these faculties, of which we find ourselves in possession? Ought we not to inquire what mighty forces of Nature and of Providence are sweeping us along, and whither their currents are tending? what parts of the great system in which we are placed can be accommodated to us, and to what parts we must accommodate ourselves?

Before such a theme I stand in awe. On which side shall its vastness be approached? Shall I speak of the principles on which an educational system for a State should be organized; or of the means and agencies by which it should be administered, in contrast with the absence of any fundamental plan? From the Capitol, where the sovereign law is enacted, and whence it is promulgated, to the school district and the fireside, where the grand results of that law are to appear, in a more prosperous, more intelligent, more virtuous, and, of course, more happy generation of men and women, there is a vast intervening distance; — upon which one of the many links of the chain that binds these two extremes together shall I expatiate?

I venture, my friends, at this time, to solicit your attention, while I attempt to lay before you some of the re-

lations which we bear to the cause of Education, because we are the citizens of a Republic ; and thence to deduce some of the reasons, which, under our political institutions, make the proper training of the rising generation the highest earthly duty of the risen.

It is a truism, that free institutions multiply human energies. A chained body cannot do much harm ; a chained mind can do as little. In a despotic government, the human faculties are benumbed and paralyzed ; in a Republic, they glow with an intense life, and burst forth with uncontrollable impetuosity. In the former, they are circumscribed and straitened in their range of action ; in the latter, they have " ample room and verge enough," and may rise to glory or plunge into ruin. Amidst universal ignorance, there cannot be such wrong notions about right, as there may be in a community partially enlightened ; and false conclusions which have been reasoned out are infinitely worse than blind impulses.

To demonstrate the necessity of education in our government, I shall not attempt to derive my proofs from the history of other Republics. Such arguments are becoming stale. Besides, there are so many points of difference between our own political institutions, and those of any other government calling itself free, which has ever existed, that the objector perpetually eludes or denies the force of our reasoning, by showing some want of analogy between the cases presented.

I propose, therefore, on this occasion, not to adduce, as proofs, what has been true only in past times ; but what is true at the present time, and must always continue to be true. I shall rely, not on precedents, but on the nature of things ; and draw my arguments less from history than from humanity.

Now it is undeniable that, with the possession of cer-

tain higher faculties, — common to all mankind, — whose proper cultivation will bear us upward to hitherto undiscovered regions of prosperity and glory, we possess, also, certain lower faculties or propensities, — equally common, — whose improper indulgence leads, inevitably, to tribulation, and anguish, and ruin. The propensities to which I refer seem indispensable to our temporal existence, and, if restricted within proper limits, they are promotive of our enjoyment ; but, beyond those limits, they work dishonor and infatuation, madness and despair. As servants, they are indispensable ; as masters, they torture as well as tyrannize. Now despotic and arbitrary governments have dwarfed and crippled the powers of doing evil as much as the powers of doing good ; but a republican government, from the very fact of its freedom, unreins their speed, and lets loose their strength. It is justly alleged against despotisms, that they fetter, mutilate, almost extinguish the noblest powers of the human soul ; but there is a *per contra* to this, for which we have not given them credit ; — they circumscribe the ability to do the greatest evil, as well as to do the greatest good.

My proposition, therefore, is simply this : — If republican institutions do wake up unexampled energies in the whole mass of a people, and give them implements of unexampled power wherewith to work out their will, then these same institutions ought also to confer upon that people unexampled wisdom and rectitude. If these institutions give greater scope and impulse to the lower order of faculties belonging to the human mind, then they must also give more authoritative control and more skilful guidance to the higher ones. If they multiply temptations, they must fortify against them. If they quicken the activity and enlarge the sphere of the appetites and passions, they must, at least in an equal ratio, establish

the authority and extend the jurisdiction of reason and conscience. In a word, we must not add to the impulsive, without also adding to the regulating forces.

If we maintain institutions, which bring us within the action of new and unheard-of powers, without taking any corresponding measures for the government of those powers, we shall perish by the very instruments prepared for our happiness.

The truth has been so often asserted, that there is no security for a republic but in morality and intelligence, that a repetition of it seems hardly in good taste. But all permanent blessings being founded on permanent truths, a continued observance of the truth is the condition of a continued enjoyment of the blessing. I know we are often admonished that, without intelligence and virtue, as a chart and a compass, to direct us in our untried political voyage, we shall perish in the first storm; but I venture to add that, without these qualities, we shall not wait for a storm, — we cannot weather a calm. If the sea is as smooth as glass we shall founder, for we are in a stone boat. Unless these qualities pervade the general head and the general heart, not only will republican institutions vanish from amongst us, but the words *prosperity* and *happiness* will become obsolete. And all this may be affirmed, not from historical examples merely, but from the very constitution of our nature. We are created and brought into life with a set of innate, organic dispositions or propensities, which a free government rouses and invigorates, and which, if not bridled and tamed, by our actually seeing the eternal laws of justice, as plainly as we can see the sun in the heavens, — and by our actually feeling the sovereign sentiment of duty, as plainly as we feel the earth beneath our feet, — will hurry us forward into regions populous with every form of evil.

Divines, moralists, metaphysicians, — almost without exception, — regard the human being as exceedingly complex in his mental or spiritual constitution, as well as in his bodily organization ; — they regard him as having a plurality of tendencies and affections, though brought together and embodied in one person. Hence, in all discussions or disquisitions respecting human nature, they analyze or assort it into different classes of powers and faculties.

First, there is a conscience in every one of us, and a sense of responsibility to God, which establish a moral relation between us and our Creator ; and which, — though we could call all the grandeur and the splendors of the universe our own, and were lulled and charmed by all its music and its beauty, — will forever banish all true repose from our bosom, unless our nature and our lives are supposed to be in harmony with the divine will. The object of these faculties is, their Infinite Creator ; and they never can be supremely happy unless they are tuned to perfect concord with every note in the celestial anthems of love and praise.

Then there is a set of faculties that we denominate social or sympathetic, among the most conspicuous of which is benevolence or philanthropy, — a sentiment which mysteriously makes our pulse throb, and our nerves shrink, at the pains or adversity of others, even though, at the same time, our own frame is whole, and our own fortunes gladdening. How beautiful and marvellous a thing it is, when imbosomed in a happy family, surrounded by friends and children, — which even Paradise had not, — that the history of idolatry in the far-off islands of the Pacific, or of the burning of Hindoo widows on the other side of the globe, amongst a people whom we never saw and never shall see, should pierce our

hearts like a knife ! How glorious a quality of our nature it is, that the story of some old martyr or hero, who nobly upheld truth with life, — though his dust has now been blown about by the winds for twenty centuries, — should transport us with such feelings of admiration and ecstasy, that we long to have been he, and to have borne all his sufferings ; and we find ourselves involuntarily sublimed by so noble a passion, that the most terrible form of death, if hallowed by a righteous cause, looks lovely as a bride to the bridegroom !

There are also the yearning, doting fondness of parents for children, of natural kindred for each other, and the passionate, yet pure affection of the sexes, which fit us for the duties and the endearments of domestic life. Even that vague general attachment to our fellow-beings, which binds men together in fraternal associations, is so strong, and is universally recognized as so natural, that we look upon hermits and solitaries as creatures half-mad or half-monstrous. The sphere of these sentiments or affections is around us and before us, — family, neighborhood, country, kind, posterity.

And lastly, there is the strictly selfish part of our nature, which consists of a gang of animal appetites, — a horde of bandit propensities, — each one of which, by its own nature, is deaf to the voice of God, reckless of the welfare of men, blind, remorseless, atheistic ; — each one of the whole pack being supremely bent upon its own indulgence, and ready to barter earth and heaven to win it. We all have some pretty definite idea of beasts of prey and of birds of prey ; but not among the whelps of the lion's lair, not among the young of the vulture's nest, are there any spoilers at all comparable to those that may be trained from the appetites and propensities which each human being brings with him into the world.



I am sorry not to be able to speak of this part of our common nature in a more complimentary manner ; but to utter what facts will not warrant, would be to exchange the records of truth for a song of Delilah.

The first of these animal propensities is the simple want of food or nourishment. This appetite may be very gentlemanly and well-behaved. There is nothing in it necessarily incompatible with decorum and good-breeding, or with the conscientious fulfilment of every private and every public duty. When duly indulged, and duly restrained, it furnishes the occasions, — around the family and the hospitable board, — for much of the pleasure of domestic, and the enjoyment of social existence. But thousands go through life, without ever having occasion to know or to think of its awful strength. Behold, what this appetite has actually and not unfrequently become, when, taking the ghastly form of Hunger in a besieged city, or amongst a famishing people, it forces the living to feed upon flesh torn from the limbs of the dead. Look at that open boat, weltering in mid-ocean ; it holds the crew of a foundered vessel who have escaped with life only, but days and days have passed away, and no morsel of food or drop of drink has assuaged the tortures of hunger and thirst. At first, they wept together as suffering friends, then they prayed together as loving Christians ; but now friendship is extinct and prayer is choked, for hunger has grown to a cannibal, uttering horrible whispers, and proposing the fatal lot, by which the blood of one is to fill a bowl to be quaffed by the rest ! Look again at the ravages of this appetite, in its other and more familiar, though not less appalling forms ; — look at its havoc of life in China, where thousands annually perish by opium ; in Turkey, where the pipe kills more than the bowstring ; and at the Golgothas of Intem-

perance, in Ireland,\* in Old England, and in New England. Now, the elements of this appetite are common to us all; and no untempted mortal can tell what he would do, or would not do, if he were in the besieged city, or in the ocean-tost, provisionless boat. The sensations belonging to this appetite reside in the ends of a few nerves, — called by the anatomists, *papillæ*, — which are situated about the tongue and throat; and yet, on the wants of this narrow spot, are founded the cultivation of myriads of orchards, vineyards and gardens, the tilling of grain-fields, prairie-like in extent, the scouring of forests for game, the dredging of seas, and the rearing of cattle upon a thousand hills. Granaries are heaped, cellars filled, vintages flow, to gratify this instinct for food. And what toils and perils, what European as well as African slavery among the ignorant, and what epicurean science among the learned, have their origin and end in this one appetite! Once, cooling draughts from the fountain, and delicious fruits from the earth, sufficed for its demands. Now, whenever the banquet table is spread, there must be mountains of viands and freshets of wine. What absurdities as well as wickednesses it tempts men, otherwise rational and religious, to commit. Have we not all seen instances of men, who will ask the blessing of Heaven upon the bounties wherewith a paternal Providence has spread their daily board, — who will pray that their bodies may be nourished and strengthened for usefulness, by partaking of its supplies; and will then sit down and almost kill themselves by indulgence! It is as impossible to satisfy the refinements, as to satiate the grossness of this appetite. The Roman, Apicius, by his gold, provided a dish for his table composed of thousands

\* At the time this was written, the redemption of Ireland by Father Mathew was only beginning.

of nightingales' tongues ; a despot, by his power, distils the happiness of a thousand slaves, to make one delicious drop for his palate. This appetite, then, though consisting of only a few sensations about the mouth and throat, is a crucible in which the treasures of the world may be dissolved. Behold the epicure and the inebriate, — men who affect a lofty indignation if you question that they are rational beings ; — see them bartering friends, family and fame, body, soul and estate, — to gratify a space not more than two inches square in the inside of the mouth ! Do we not need some new form of expression, some single word, where we can condense, into one monosyllable, the meaning of ten thousand fools !

Take another of these animal wants, — that of clothing. How insignificant it seems, and yet of what excesses it is capable ! What sacrifices it demands ! what follies and crimes it suborns us to commit ! Compare the first fig-leaf suit with the monthly publication of London and Parisian fashions ! Our first parents began with a vegetable, pea-green wardrobe, plucked from the nearest tree, and were their own dress-makers. Now, how many fields are tilled for linen and cotton and silks ! how many races of animals are domesticated, or are hunted under the line, around the poles, in ocean or in air, that their coverings may supply the materials of ours ! How many ships plough the ocean to fetch and carry ; what ponderous machinery rolls ; how many warehouses burst with an opulence of merchandise, — all having ultimate reference to this demand for covering ! Nor is there any assignable limit to the refinements and the expenditures, to the frauds and the cruelties, which may grow on this stock. The demands of this propensity, like those of the former, if suffered to go onward unrestrained, increase to infinity. The Austrian, Prince Esterhazy, lately visited

the different courts of Europe, dressed in a coat which cost five hundred thousand dollars ; and it cost him from five hundred to a thousand dollars every time he put it on. Yet, undoubtedly, if he had not thought himself sadly stinted in his means, he would have had a better coat, and underclothes to match !

Nor is this all which is founded upon the sensations of the skin, when the thermometer is much below, or much above sixty-five degrees. Shelter must be had ; and how much marble and granite rises from the quarry ; what masses of clay are shaped and hardened into bricks ; how many majestic forests start from their stations, and move afield, to be built up into villages and cities and temples, for the habitations of men ! And, notwithstanding all that has been done under the promptings of this appetite, who, if his wishes could execute themselves, would remain satisfied with the house he lives in, the temple he worships in, or the tomb in which he expects to sleep ?

Again ; there are seasons of the year when vegetable life fails, when the corn and the vine cease to luxuriate in the fields, and the orchards no longer bend with fruitage. There is also the season of infancy, when, though bountiful Nature should scatter her richest productions spontaneously around us, we could not reach out our hands to gather them ; and again, there is the season of old age, with its attendant infirmities, when our exhausted frame can no longer procure the necessaries of existence. Now, that in summer we may provide for winter, — that during the vigor of manhood we may lay up provisions for the imbecility of our old age, and for the helplessness of children, we have been endued by our Maker with an instinct of acquisition, of accumulation ; — or with a desire, as we familiarly express it, to lay up something for a rainy day. Thus a disposition, or mental

pre-adaptation, was given us, before birth, for these necessities which were to arise after it, just as our eye was fitted for the light to shine through, before it was born into this heaven-full of sunshine. Look at this blind instinct, — the love of gain, — as it manifests itself even in infancy. A child, at first, has no idea that there is any other owner of the universe but himself. Whatever pleases him, he forthwith appropriates. His wants are his title-deeds and bills of sale. He does not ask in whose garden the fruit grew, or by whose diving the pearl was fished up. Carry him through a museum or a market, and he demands, in perfectly intelligible, though perhaps in inarticulate language, whatever arrests his fancy. His whole body of law, whether civil or criminal, — *omne ejus corpus juris*, — is in three words, “I want it.” If the candle pleases him, he demands the candle; if the rainbow and the stars please him, he demands the rainbow and the stars.

And how does this blind instinct overleap the objects for which it was given! Not content with competency in means, and disdaining the gradual accumulations of honest industry, it rises to insatiate avarice and rapacity. From the accursed thirst for gold have come the felon frauds of the market-place, and the more wicked pious frauds of the church, the robber’s blow, the burglar’s stealthy step around the midnight couch, the pirate’s murders, the rapine of cities, the plundering and captivity of nations. Even now, in self-styled Christian communities, are there not men who, under the sharp goadings of this impulse, equip vessels to cross the ocean, — not to carry the glad tidings of the gospel to heathen lands, but to descend upon defenceless villages in a whirlwind of fire and ruin, to kidnap men, women and children, and to transport them through all the horrors of

the middle passage, where their cries of agony and despair outvoice the storm, that the wretched victims may at last be sold into remorseless bondage, to wear chains, and to bequeath chains ; — and all this is perpetrated and suffered because a little gold can be transmuted, by such fiery alchemy, from human tears and blood ! Such is the inexorable power of cupidity, in self-styled Christian lands, in sight of the spires of God's temples pointing upward to heaven, which, if Truth had its appropriate emblems, would be reversed and point downward to hell.

Startle not, my friends, at these far-off enormities. Are there not monsters amongst ourselves, who sell their own children into bondage for the money they can earn ? who coin not only the health of their own offspring, but their immortal capacities of intelligence and virtue, into pelf ? Are there not others, who, at home, at the town-meeting, and at the school-meeting, win all the victories of ignorance by the cry of expense ? Are there not men amongst us, possessed of superfluous wealth, who will vote against a blackboard for a schoolroom, because the scantling costs a shilling and the paint sixpence !

Nay, do we not see men of lofty intellects, of mind formed to go leaping and bounding on from star to star in the firmament of knowledge, absorbed, sunk, in the low pursuit of gain ? and if, perchance, some of their superfluous coffers are lost, they go mad, — the fools ! — and whine and mope in the wards of a lunatic hospital, because, forsooth, they must content themselves with a little less equipage, or upholstery, or millinery ! Such follies, losses, crimes, prove to what infinite rapacity the instinct of acquisition may grow.

Again ; there is the natural sentiment of self-respect, or self-appreciation ; — when existing in excess, it is popularly called self-esteem. This innate tendency im-

parts to every individual the feeling that, in and of himself, he is of some mark and consequence. This instinct was given us that it might act outwards and embody itself in all dignity and nobleness of conduct; that it might preserve us, at all times, from whatever is beneath us or unworthy of us, though we were assured that no other being in the universe knew it, or ever would know it. For, when a man of true honor, — one who has formed a just estimate of the noble capacities with which God has endowed him, and of his own duty in using them, — when such a man is beset by a base temptation, and the tempter whispers, — “You may yield, for, in this solitude and impenetrable darkness, none can ever know your momentary lapse,” — his indignant reply is, “But I shall know it myself!” Without this elevating and sustaining instinct, existing in some degree, and acting with some efficiency, no man could ever hold himself erect, in the midst of so many millions of other men, each by the law of nature equal to himself. Without this, when surveying the sublimities of creation, — the cataract, the mountain, the ocean, the awful magnificence of the midnight heavens; or when contemplating the power and perfections of Jehovah, — every one would lay his hand on his mouth and his mouth in the dust, never to rise again.

But this common propensity, like the others, is capable of infinite excess. There are no bounds to its expansiveness and exorbitancy. When acting with intensity, it seems to possess creative power. It changes emptiness into fulness. It not only reveals to its possessor a self-worthiness wholly invisible to others, but it so overflows with arrogance and pride as to confer an excellence upon every thing connected with or pertaining to itself. The tyrant Gessler mounted his cap upon a pole, and com-

manded his subjects to pay homage to it. It had imbibed a virtue from contact with his head, which made it of greater value than a nation of freemen. It is said of one of the present British dukes, that he will give a thousand pounds sterling for a single worthless book, or for some ancient marble or pebble, provided it is known to be the only one of the kind in existence, — *a unique*, — so that his pride can blow its trumpet in the ears of all mankind, and say, “In respect of this old book, or marble, or pebble, I have what no other man has, and am superior to the rest of the world.” Constable was so inflated with the supposed honor of being the publisher of Sir Walter Scott’s novels, that, in one of his paroxysms of pride, he exclaimed with an oath, “I am all but the author of the Waverley novels!” Yes, he came as near as type-setter! It is this feeling which makes the organ-blower appropriate the plaudits bestowed upon the musician, and the hero’s valet mistake himself for his master. It is this propensity that makes a man proud of his ancestors, who were dead centuries before he was born; — proud of garments which he never had wit enough to make, while he despises the tailor by whose superior skill they were prepared; — and proud of owning a horse that can trot a mile in three minutes, though the credit of his speed belongs to the farmer who reared, and the jockey who trained, and even to the hostler who grooms him, infinitely more than to the self-supposed gentleman who sits behind him in a gig, and just *lets him go*! Other selfish propensities play the strangest tricks, delusions, impostures, upon us, and make us knaves and fools; but it is the inflation of pride, more than any thing else, that swells us into an Infinite Sham.

I have time to mention but one more of this lower order of the human faculties, — *the Love of Approbation*.



As a proper self-respect makes us discard and disdain all unworthy conduct, even when alone ; so a rational desire to obtain the good-will of others stimulates us to generosity, and magnanimity, and fortitude, in the performance of our social duties. It is a strong auxiliary motive, — useful as an impulse, though fatal as a guide. I think it is by the common consent of mankind, that the plaudits of the world rank as the third, in the list of rewards for virtuous conduct, — coming next after the smiles of Heaven and the approval of conscience. In this country, the bestowment of offices is the current coin in which the love of approbation pays and receives its debts. Offices, in the United States, seem to be a *legal tender*, for nobody refuses them. But if this desire becomes rabid and inappeasable, if it grows from a subordinate instinct into a domineering and tyrannical passion, it reverses the moral order, and places the applauses of men before the rewards of conscience and the approval of Heaven. The victim of this usurper-passion will find the doctrines of revealed truth in the prevalent opinions of the community where he resides ; and the doctrines of political truth in the majority of votes at the last election, — modified by the chances of a change before the next. Under its influence, the intellect will plot any fraud, and the tongue will utter any falsehood, in order to cajole and inveigle a majority of the people ; but should that majority fail, it will compel its poor slave to abandon the old party, and try its fortunes with a new one.

There are other original, innate propensities, which cannot properly be discussed on an occasion like this. Their action, within certain limits, is necessary to self-preservation, and to the preservation of the race ; a description of their excesses would make every cheek pale and every heart faint.

Now there are a few general truths appertaining to this whole tribe of propensities. Though existing with different degrees of strength, in different individuals, yet they are common to the whole race. As they are necessary to self-preservation, their bestowment is almost universal, and we regard every man as so far unnatural, and suffering privation, who has not the elements of them all, mingled in his composition. As they are necessary to the continuance of the race, we must suppose, at least during the present constitution of human nature, that they will always exist; and that all improvements in government, science, morals, faith, and other constituents of civilization, will produce their blessed effects, not by extirpating, but by controlling them, and by bringing them into subjection to the social and the divine law. As we have a moral nature to which God speaks, commanding us to love and obey his holy will; as we have a social nature, which sends a circulating current of sympathy from our hearts around through the hearts of children, friends, kindred and kind, mingling our pleasures and pains and their pleasures and pains in one common stream; so, by these propensities, we are jointed into this earthly life, and this frame of material things.

Again; each one of these propensities is related to the *whole* of its class of objects, and not to any proportionate or definite quantity of them; — just as the appetite of a wolf or a vulture is adapted or related to the blood of all lambs and all kids, and not merely to the blood of some particular number of lambs and kids. Each one of them, also, is blind to every thing but its own gratification; it sallies forth, — if uncontrolled, — and seizes and riots upon its objects, regardless of all sacrifices, and defiant of all consequences. Each one of them is capacious as an abyss, is insatiable by indulgence, would consume

whatever has been created for all, and then task Omnipotence to invent new pleasures for its pampering. Was any royal epicure ever satisfied, while a luxury was known to exist which he had not tasted? To rear an architectural pile, or a mausoleum, vast as the unrestrained desires of man, the cedars of Lebanon would be too few; nor could the materials of his wardrobe be supplied, though Damascus were his merchant. There have been thousands of men, all whose coffers were literally filled with gold; but where the avaricious man in whose heart there was not room for more coffers? The experiment was tried with Alexander of Macedon, whether the love of power could be satisfied by the conquest of all the nations of the earth. He did not weep, at first, for the conquest of the world; it was only after conquering one world that he wept for the conquest of more. The ambition of Napoleon never burned with a fiercer flame than when he escaped from his island-prison to remount the throne of France; although it is said that the wars in which he had then been engaged had cost Europe five millions of human lives. But to slake his thirst for power and fame, the blood of five millions or of five hundred millions, the destruction of a continent or a constellation, of zone or zodiac, would have been nothing.

And thus it is with all the propensities. Their object must be obtained, whether, like Richard, they murder two male children, or, like Herod, all under two years of age. Pride built the pyramids and the Mexican mounds. Appetite led down the Goths and Vandals into the delicious South. Cupidity brought forth the slave-trade. And so of other enormities, — the Bastille, the Inquisition, the Harem, — they grew on the same stock. And though our bodies seem so small, and occupy so little space, yet, through these propensities, they are capable of swelling

out earth-o'erspreading branches, all clustering with abominations.

Our propensities have no affinity with reason or conscience. Did you ever hear two persons conversing about a third, whose ruin and infamy they agreed had come from the amount of his fortune, or from his facilities for indulgence, when, in the very breath in which they spoke of the resistless power of the temptation over him, they did not add that, in their own persons, they should be willing to run the same risk? This is the language of all the propensities. They are willing to run any risk, whether it be of health or of character, of time or of eternity. This explains how it is, that some men not wholly lost to virtue, — men who acknowledge their responsibility to God, and their obligations to conscience, — but in whom the propensities predominate and tyrannize; — I say this explains how it is that such men, when stung and maddened by the goadings of desire, wish themselves bereft of their better attributes, that they might give full career to passion, without remorse of conscience or dread of retribution. That human depravity, which, hitherto, has made the history of our race, like the roll of the prophet, a record of lamentation and mourning and woe, has worked out through these propensities; and, if the very substance and organization of human nature be not changed, by the eradication of these instincts, that depravity which is, to a greater or less degree, to make the future resemble the past, will pour out its agonies and its atrocities through the same channels!

Such, then, are our latent capabilities of evil, — all ready to be evolved, should the restraints of reason, conscience, religion, be removed. Here are millions of men, each with appetites capacious of infinity, and raging to be satisfied out of a supply of means too scanty for any

one of them. Millions of coveting eyes are fastened on the same object, — millions of hands thrust out to seize it. What ravening, torturing, destroying, then, must ensue, if these hounds cannot be lashed back into their kennel! They must be governed; they cannot be destroyed. Nature declares that the germs, the embryos, of these incipient monsters, shall not be annihilated. She reproduces them with every human being that comes into the world. Nor, indeed, is it desirable, even if it were practicable, that they should be wholly expunged and razed out of our constitution. He who made us, knew our circumstances and necessities, and He has implanted them in our nature too deep for eradication. Besides, within their proper sphere, they confer an innocent, though a subordinate enjoyment. Certainly, we would not make all men hermits and anchorites. Let us be just, even to the appetites. No man is the worse because he keenly relishes and enjoys the bountiful provisions which Heaven has made for his food, his raiment, and his shelter. Indeed, why were these provisions ever made, if they are not to be enjoyed? Surely they are not superfluities and supernumeraries, cumbering a creation which would have been more perfect without them. Let them then be acquired and enjoyed, though always with moderation and temperance. Let the lover of wealth seek wealth by all honest means, and with earnestness, if he will; — let him surround himself with the comforts and the embellishments of life, and add the pleasures of beauty to the pleasures of utility. Let every honorable man indulge a quick and sustaining confidence in his own worthiness, whenever disparaged or maligned; and let him count upon the affections of his friends, and the benedictions of his race, as a part of the solid rewards of virtue. These, and kindred feelings, are not to be crushed,

extinguished. Let them rouse themselves in presence of their objects, and rush out to seize them, and neigh, like a war-horse for the battle,—only let them know that they have a rider, to whose eye no mist can dim the severe line they are never to pass, and whose arm can bend every neck of them, like the twig of an osier.

But I must pass to the next topic for consideration, — the stimulus which, in this country, is applied to the propensities; and the free, unbarred, unbounded career, which is here opened for their activity. In every other nation that has ever existed,—not even excepting Greece and Rome,—the mind of the masses has been obstructed in its development. Amongst millions of men, only some half-dozen of individuals,—often only a single individual,—have been able to pour out the lava of their passions, with full, volcanic force. These few men have made the Pharaohs, the Neros, the Napoleons of the race. The rest have usually been subjected to a systematic course of blinding, deafening, crippling. As an inevitable consequence of this, the minds of men have never yet put forth one-thousandth part of their tremendous energies. Bad men have swarmed upon the earth, it is true, but they have been weak men. Another consequence is, that we, by deriving our impressions from history, have formed too low an estimate of the marvellous powers and capacities of the human being for evil as well as for good. The general estimate is altogether inadequate to what the common mind will be able to effect, when apt instruments are put into its hands, and the wide world is opened for its sphere of operations. Amongst savage nations, it is true, the will has been more free; but there it has had none of the instruments of civilized life, wherewith to execute its purposes — such, for instance, as the

mechanic arts ; a highly cultivated language, with the general ability to read and write it ; fire-arms ; engineering ; steam ; the press, and the post-office ;—and among civilized nations, though the means have been far more ample, yet the will has been broken or corrupted. Even the last generation in this country, — the generation that moulded our institutions into their present form, — were born and educated under other institutions, and they brought into active life strong hereditary and traditional feelings of respect for established authority, merely because it was established, — of veneration for law, simply because it was law, — and of deference both to secular and ecclesiastical rank, because they had been accustomed to revere rank. But scarcely any vestige of this reverence for the past now remains. The momentum of hereditary opinion is spent. The generation of men now entering upon the stage of life, — the generation which is to occupy that stage for the next forty years, — will act out their desires more fully, more effectively, than any generation of men that has ever existed. Already, the tramp of this innumerable host is sounding in our ears. They are the men who will take counsel of their desires, and make it law. The condition of society is to be only an embodiment of their mighty will ; and if greater care be not taken than has ever heretofore been taken, to inform and regulate that will, it will inscribe its laws all over the face of society in such broad and terrific characters, that, not only whoever runs may read, but whoever reads will run. Should avarice and pride obtain the mastery, then will the humble and the poor be ground to dust beneath their chariot-wheels ; but, on the other hand, should besotting vices and false knowledge bear sway, then will every wealthy, and every educated, and every refined individual and family, stand in the same relation to society, in which game stands to the sportsman !

In taking a survey of the race, we see that all of human character and conduct may be referred to two forces ; the innate force of the mind acting outwards, and the force of outward things acting upon the mind. First, there is an internal, salient, elancing vigor of the mind, which, according to its state and condition, originates thoughts, desires, impulses, and projects them outwards into words and deeds ; and secondly, there is the external force of circumstances, laws, traditions, customs, which besieges the mind, environs it, places a guard at all its outer gates, permits some of its desires and thoughts to issue forth, and to become words and actions, but forbids others to escape, beats them back, seals the lips that would utter them, smites off the arm that would perform them, punishes the soul that would send them forth by finding an avenue in every sense and in every nerve, through which to send up tormentors to destroy its hopes and lay waste its sanctuaries ; and finally, if all these means fail to subdue and silence the internal energy, then the external power dismisses the soul itself from the earth, by crushing the physical organization which it inhabits. These two forces, — on the one hand, the mind trajecting itself forth, and seeking to do its will on whatever is external to itself, — and, on the other hand, whatever is external to the mind, modifying or resisting its movements, — these constitute the main action of the human drama. As a mathematician would express it, human conduct and character move in the diagonal of these two forces. Sometimes, indeed, both forces are coincident, sometimes antagonistic ; but it is useless to inquire which force has predominated, as no universal rule can be laid down respecting them. In despotisms, the external prevails ; in revolutions, — such as the French, for instance, — the internal. Why are the Chinese, for a hundred succes-



sive generations, transcripts and fac-similes of each other, as though the dead grandparent had come back again in the grandchild, and so round and round ? It is because, among the Chinese, this external force overlays the growing faculties of the soul, and compels them, as they grow, to assume a prescribed shape. In that country the laws and customs are so inflexible, and the spirit of the people is so impotent, that their minds grow, as it were, into the hollow of a brazen envelope, whose walls are not removable nor penetrable ; and hence, all growth must conform to the shape and size of the concave surface. By their education, laws, and penalties, the minds of the people are made to grow into certain social, political, and religious forms, just as certainly, and on the same principle of force, as the feet of their beauties are made, by small, inelastic shoes, to grow hoof-wise. In Russian Poland, a subject is as much debarred from touching certain topics, in the way of discussion, as from seizing on the jewels of the crown. The knout and the Siberian mines await the first outward expression of the transgressor. Hence the divinely-formed soul, created to admire, through intelligence, this glorious universe ; to go forth, through knowledge, into all lands and times ; to be identified, through sympathy, with all human fortunes ; to know its Maker, and its immortal destiny, is driven back at every door of egress, is darkened at every window where light could enter, and is chained to the vassal spot which gave it birth, — where the very earth, as well as its inhabitant, is blasted by the common curse of bondage. In Oriental and African despotisms, the mind of the millions grows, only as the trees of a noble forest could grow in the rocky depths of a cavern, without strength, or beauty, or healing balm, — in impurity and darkness, fed by poisonous exhalations from stagnant pools, all upward and outward

expansion introverted by solid barriers, and forced back into unsightly forms. Thus has it always fared with the faculties of the human soul when cavered in despotism. They have dwelt in intellectual, denser than subterranean, darkness. Their most tender, sweet, and hallowed emotions have been choked and blighted. The pure and sacred effusions of the heart have been converted into hatred of the good and idolatry of the base, for want of the light and the air of true freedom and instruction. The world can suffer no loss equal to that spiritual loss which is occasioned by attempting to destroy, instead of regulating, the energies of the mind.

Since the Christian epoch, great has been the change in Christian countries between the relative strength of the mind, acting outwards, and the strength of outward things, repulsing and stifling the action of the mind. Christianity established one conviction in the minds of thousands and tens of thousands, which other religions had established in the mind of here and there an individual only. This conviction was, that the future existence is infinitely more important than the present ; — the difference between the two being so great as to reduce all mere worldly distinctions to insignificance and nothing. Hence it might have been predicted from the beginning, that the human mind, acting under the mighty stimulus of Christianity, would eventually triumph over despotism. The interests of despotism lie in this life ; those of Christianity, not only in this, but in the life to come. It was, therefore, mortality at one end of the lever, and immortality at the other. When one party contends for the blessings of life merely, while the other contends for blessings higher than life, the latter, by a law of the moral nature, must ultimately prevail.

Although many of the ancients had a belief in a fu-

ture state of existence, yet it was apprehended by them so dimly, and its retributions were pressed home so feebly on their consciences, that the belief appears to have had but little effect upon the conduct of individuals, or the administration and policy of states ; and, for all practical purposes, it would hardly be too strong an expression to say, that immortality was *first revealed* by Christ. During the first three centuries of our era, the knowledge of this discovery, — so to call it, — was widely diffused among men. Then, by the union of Church and State, under Constantine, the civil power came in, and attempted to appropriate the benefits of the new discovery to itself, so that it might use divine motives for selfish purposes. And, had the throne and the priesthood sought to govern men by the motive of fear alone, they might have retained their ascendancy, — we cannot tell for what period of time. But they found a natural conscience in men, a sense of responsibility to duty, which they were so short-sighted as to enlist in their service ; — I say, short-sighted, for, when they aroused the sentiment of duty in the human soul, and used it as a means of securing obedience to themselves, they called up a power stronger than themselves. The ally was mightier than the chief that invoked its aid. Hence the uprisings, the rebellions of the people against regal and ecclesiastical oppression. Rulers attempted to subdue the people by persecutions, massacres, burnings, but in vain ; because, though they could kill men, they could not kill conscience. After a conflict of sixteen centuries, the victory has been achieved. Mind has triumphed over the quellers of mind, — the internal force over the external. When mankind shall be removed by time to such a distance that they can see past events in their true proportions and relative magnitude, this struggle between oppression on the

one side, striving to keep the human mind in its prison-house, and to set an eternal seal upon the door ; and, on the other hand, the convulsive efforts of that mind to dis-inthrall itself, and to utter its impatient thoughts ; and to form, and to abide by, its own convictions of truth, — this conflict, I say, will be the grand, central, conspicuous object, in the history of our era. The history of wars between rival dynasties, for the conquest or dismemberment of empires, will fade away, and be but dimly visible in the retrospect ; while this struggle between the soul and its enslavers will stand far out in the foreground, — the towering, supereminent figure on the historic canvas.

It has not been in accustomed modes, nor with weapons of earthly temper only, that this warfare has been waged. As the energies of the soul, acting under the mighty impulses of a sense of duty and the prospect of an endless futurity, waxed stronger and stronger, tyrants forged new engines to subdue it. Their instruments have been the dungeons of a thousand Bastilles ; the Inquisition, whose ministers were literally flames of fire ; devastations of whole provinces ; huntings of entire communities of men into the mountains, like timorous flocks ; massacres, — in one only of which, thirty thousand men and women were slaughtered at the ringing of a signal-bell ; and, after exhausting all the agonies of earth and time, they unvaulted the Bottomless Pit, and, suspending their victims over the abyss, they threatened to hurl them down into the arms of beckoning demons, impatient to begin their pastime of eternal torture. But, impassive to annihilation ; though smitten down, yet, with recuperative energy, springing from its fall ; victorious over the sufferings of this world and the more formidable terrors of another, — the human soul, immortal, invulnerable, invincible, has

at last unmanacled and emancipated itself. It has triumphed ; and here, in our age and in our land, it is now rising up before us, gigantic, majestic, lofty as an archangel, and, like an archangel, to be saved or lost by its obedience or its transgressions. Amongst ourselves it is, that this spirit is now walking forth, full of its new-found life, wantoning in freshly-discovered energies, surrounded by all the objects which can inflame its boundless appetites, and, as yet, too purblind, from the long darkness of its prison-house, to discern clearly between its blessing and its bane. That unconquerable force of the human soul, which all the arts and power of despotism, — which all the enginery borrowed from both worlds, — could not subdue, is here, amongst ourselves, to do its sovereign will.

Let us now turn for a moment to see what means and stimulants our institutions have provided for the use of the mighty powers and passions they have unloosed. No apparatus so skilful was ever before devised. Instead of the slow and cumbrous machinery of former times, we have provided that which is quick-working and far-reaching, and which may be used for the destruction as easily as for the welfare of its possessors. Our institutions furnish as great facilities for wicked men, in all departments of wickedness, as phosphorus and lucifer matches furnish to the incendiary. What chemistry has done, in these preparations, over the old art of rubbing two sticks together, — for the wretch who would fire your dwelling, our social partnerships have done for flagitious and unprincipled men. Through the right, — almost universal, — of suffrage, we have established a community of power ; and no proposition is more plain and self-evident, than that nothing but mere popular inclination

lies between a community of power and a community in every thing else. And though, in the long-run, and when other things are equal, a righteous cause always has a decisive advantage over an evil one, yet, in the first onset between right and wrong, bad men possess one advantage over the good. They have double resources, — two armories. The arts of guilt are as welcome to them as the practices of justice. They can use poisoned weapons as well as those approved by the usages of war.

Again ; has it been sufficiently considered, that all which has been said, — and truly said, — of the excellence of our institutions, if administered by an upright people, must be reversed and read backwards, if administered by a corrupt one ? I am aware that some will be ready to say, “ We have been unwise and infatuated to confide all the constituents of our social and political welfare to such irresponsible keeping.” But let me ask of such, — of what avail is their lamentation ? The irresistible movement in the diffusion of power is still progressive, not retrograde. Every year puts more of social strength into the hands of physical strength. The arithmetic of numbers is more and more excluding all estimate of moral forces, in the administration of government. And this, whether for good or for evil, will continue to be. Human beings cannot be remanded to the dungeons of imbecility, if they are to those of ignorance. The sun can as easily be turned backwards in its course, as one particle of that power, which has been conferred upon the millions, can be again monopolized by the few. To discuss the question, therefore, whether our institutions are not too free, is, for all practical purposes, as vain as it would be to discuss the question whether, on the whole, it was a wise arrangement on the part of Divine Providence, that the American continent should ever have

been created, or that Columbus should have discovered it. And let me ask, further, have those who believe our institutions to be too free, and who, therefore, would go back to less liberal ones, — have they settled the question, how far back they will go? Will they go back to the dark ages, and recall an eclipse which lasted centuries long? or will they ascend a little higher for their models, — to a time when our ancestors wore undressed skins, and burrowed in holes of the earth? or will they strike at once for the institutions of Egypt, where, though the monkey was a god, there was still a sufficient distance between him and his human worshipper? But all such discussions are vain. The oak will as soon go back into the acorn, or the bird into its shell, as we return to the monarchical or aristocratic forms of by-gone ages.

Nor let it be forgotten, in contemplating our condition, that the human passions, as unfolded and invigorated by our institutions, are not only possessed of all the prerogatives, and equipped with all the implements of sovereignty; but that they are forever roused and spurred to the most vehement efforts. It is a law of the passions, that they exert strength in proportion to the causes which excite them, — a law which holds true in cases of sanity, as well as in the terrible strength of insanity. And with what endless excitements are the passions of men here plied! With us, the Press is such a clarion, that it proclaims all the great movements of this great country, with a voice that sweeps over its whole surface, and comes back to us in echoes from its extremest borders. From the Atlantic to the Pacific, from the Lakes to the Gulf, men cheer, inflame, exasperate each other, as though they were neighbors in the same street. What the ear of Dionysius was to him, making report of every word uttered by friend or foe, our institutions have made this

land to every citizen. It is a vast sounding gallery ; and from horizon to horizon every shout of triumph and every cry of alarm are gathered up and rung in every man's dwelling. All objects which stimulate the passions of men are made to pass before the eyes of all, as in a circling panorama. In very truth we are all hung upon the same electrical wire, and if the ignorant and vicious get possession of the apparatus, the intelligent and the virtuous must take such shocks as the stupid or profligate experimenters may choose to administer.

Mark how the excitements which our institutions supply have wrought upon the love of gain and the love of place. Vast speculations, — such as in other countries would require not only royal sanctions and charters, but the equipment of fleets, and princely outfits of gold and arms, — are here rushed into, on flash paper, by clerks and apprentices, not out of their time. What party can affirm that it is exempt from members who prize office, rather than the excellence that deserves it ? *Where* can I be, — not *what* can I be, — is the question suggested to aspirants for fame. How many have their eyes fixed upon posts of honor and emolument which but one only can fill ! While few will be satisfied with occupying less than their portion of space in the public eye, thousands have marked out some great compartment of the sky for the blazonry of their names. And hence it is, that, wherever there is a signal of gain, or of power, the vultures of cupidity and of ambition darken the air. Young men launch into this tumultuous life, years earlier than has ever been witnessed elsewhere. They seek to win those prizes without delay, which, according to Nature's ordinances and appointments, are the rewards of a life of labor. Hence they find no time for studying the eternal principles of justice, veracity, equality, benevolence,



and for applying them to the complicated affairs of men. What cares a young adventurer for the immutable laws of trade, when he has purchased a ticket in some lottery of speculation, from which he expects to draw a fortune? Out of such an unbridled, unchastened love of gain, whether it traffics in townships of land or in twopenny toys, do we not know beforehand, there will come infinite falsehoods, knavery and bankruptcy? Let this state of things continue, and he will be a happy man who dares to say of any article of food or of apparel, which he eats or wears, that it has not, at some period of its preparation, or in some of its transfers, been contaminated by fraud. And what a state of society would it argue, in other respects, if the people at large should ever become indifferent to the question, whether fraud be, or be not, inwoven into the texture, and kneaded into the substance of what they daily consume, — whether what they eat or drink or wear be not an embodiment of the spirit of lies!

So the inordinate love of office will present the spectacle of gladiatorial contests, — of men struggling for station as for life, and using against each other the poisonous weapons of calumny and vituperation; — while the abiding welfare, the true greatness and prosperity of the people will be like the soil of some neutral Flanders, over which the hostile bands of partisans will march and counter-march, and convert it into battle-fields, — so that, whichever side may triumph, the people will be ruined. And even after one cause or one party has prevailed, the conquered land will not be wide enough to settle a tithe of the conquerors upon. Hence must come new rallyings; new banners must be unfurled, and the repose of the land be again broken by the convulsions of party strife. Hence, too, the death-grapple between the defenders of institutions which ought to be abolished, and the

assailants of institutions which ought to be preserved. Laocoön cries, "My life and my children are mine." The hissing and inwreathing serpents respond, "They are ours." If each party espouses and supports whatever is wrong on its own side, because such a course is deemed necessary to union and strength; and denounces whatever is right in the plans of its antagonists, because such are the approved tactics of opposition; if each party sounds the loudest alarms, when the most trivial danger from its opponents is apprehended, and sings the gentlest lullabies over perils of its own producing, can seer or prophet foretell but one catastrophe?

Again; we hear good men, every day, bemoaning the *ignorance* of certain portions of our country, and of individuals in all parts of it. The use often made of the elective franchise, the crude, unphilosophical notions, sometimes advanced in our legislative halls on questions of political economy, the erroneous views entertained by portions of the people, respecting the relation between representative and constituent, and the revolutionary ideas of others in regard to the structure of civil society, — these are cited as specimens and proofs of the *ignorance* that abounds amongst us. No greater delusion can blind us. This much-lamented ignorance, in the cases supposed, is a phantom, a spectre. The outcry against it is a false alarm, diverting attention from a real to an imaginary danger. Ignorance is not the cause of the evils referred to. With exceptions comparatively few, we have but two classes of ignorant persons amongst us, and they are harmless. Infants and idiots are ignorant; few others are so. Those whom we are accustomed to call ignorant, are full of false notions, as much worse than ignorance as wisdom is better. A merely ignorant man has no skill in adapting means to ends, whereby to jeop-

ard the welfare of great interests or great numbers. Ignorance is blankness ; or, at most, a lifeless, inert mass, which can, indeed, be moved and placed where you please, but will stay where it is placed. In Europe, there are multitudes of ignorant men, — men into whose minds no idea ever entered respecting the duties of society or of government, or the conditions of human prosperity. They, like their work-fellows, the cattle, are obedient to their masters ; and the range of their ideas on political or social questions is hardly more extensive than that of the brutes. But with our institutions, this state of things, to any great extent, is impossible. The very atmosphere we breathe is freighted with the ideas of property, of acquisition and transmission ; of wages, labor and capital ; of political and social rights ; of the appointment to, and tenure of offices ; of the reciprocal relations between the great departments of government — executive, legislative, and judicial. Every native-born child amongst us imbibes notions, either false or true, on these subjects. Let these notions be false ; let an individual grow up, with false ideas of his own nature and destiny as an immortal being, with false views respecting what government, laws, customs, should be ; with no knowledge of the works or the opinions of those great men who framed our government, and adjusted its various parts to each other ; — and when such an individual is invested with the political rights of citizenship, with power to give an authoritative voice and vote upon the affairs of his country, he will look upon all existing things as rubbish which it is his duty to sweep away, that he may have room for the erection of other structures, planned after the model of his own false ideas. No man that ever lived could, by mere intuition or instinct, form just opinions upon a thousand questions, pertaining to civil society, to its juris-

prudence, its local, national and international duties. Many truths, vital to the welfare of the people, differ in their reality, as much from the appearances which they present to uninstructed minds, as the apparent size of the sun differs from its real size, which, in truth, is so many thousand times larger than the earth, while to the untaught eye it appears to be so many thousand times smaller. And if the human propensities are here to manifest themselves through the enlarged means of false knowledge which our institutions, unaided by special instruction, will furnish; if they are to possess all the instruments and furtherances which our doctrine of political equality confers; then the result must be, a power to do evil almost infinitely greater than ever existed before, instigated by impulses proportionately strong. Hence our dangers are to be, not those of ignorance, which would be comparatively tolerable, but those of false knowledge, which transcend the powers of mortal imagination to portray. Would you appreciate the amazing difference between ignorance and false knowledge, look at France, before and during her great revolution. Before the revolution, her people were merely ignorant; during the revolution, they acted under the lights of false knowledge. An idiot is ignorant, and does little harm; a maniac has false ideas, and destroys, burns and murders.

Looking again at the nature of our institutions, we find that it is not the material or corporeal interests of man alone that are here decided by the common voice;—such, for instance, as those pertaining to finance, revenue, the adjustment of the great economical interests of society, the rival claims between agriculture, commerce and manufactures, the partition and distribution of legislative, judicial and executive powers, with a long catalogue of others of a kindred nature; but also those more sol-

em questions which pervade the innermost sanctuary of domestic life, and, for worship or for sacrilege, enter the Holy of Holies in the ark of society : — these also are submitted to the general arbitrament. The haughty lordling, whose heart never felt one throb for the welfare of mankind, gives vote and verdict on the extent of popular rights ; the libertine and debauchee give vote and verdict on the sanctity of the marriage covenant ; the atheist on the definition of blasphemy. Nor is this great people invited merely to speculate, and frame abstract theories, on these momentous themes ; to make picture models, on paper, in their closets ; they are not invited to sketch Republics of Fancy only, but they are commissioned to make Republics of Fact ; and in such Republics as they please to make, others, perforce, must please to live. If I do not like my minister, or my parish, I can *sign off*, (as we term it,) and connect myself with another ; if I do not like my town, I can move out of it ; but where shall a man sign to, or move to, out of a bad world ? Nor do our people hold these powers, as an ornament merely, as some ostensible but useless badge of Freedom ; but they keep them as instruments for use, and sometimes wield them as weapons of revenge. So closely indeed are we inwoven in the same web of fate, that a vote given on the banks of the Missouri or Arkansas may shake every plantation and warehouse on the Atlantic, and, reaching seaward, overtake and baffle enterprise, into whatever oceans it may have penetrated.

Such, then, is our condition. The minds that are to regulate all things and govern all things, in this country, are innately strong ; they are intensely stimulated ; they are supplied with the most formidable artillery of means ; and each one is authorized to form its own working-plan,

its own ground-scheme, according to which, when the social edifice has been taken to pieces, it is to be reconstructed ; — some are for going back a thousand or two thousand years for their model ; others, for introducing what they consider the millennium, at once, by force of law, or by force without law.

And now, my friends, I ask, with the deepest anxiety, what institutions exist amongst us, which at once possess the power and are administered with the efficiency, requisite to save us from the dangers that spring up in our own bosoms ? That the propensities, which each generation brings into the world, possess terrific power, and are capable of inflicting the completest ruin, none can deny. Nor will it be questioned that amongst us, they have an open career, and a command of means, such as never before co-existed. What antagonist power have we provided against them ? By what exorcism can we lay the spirits we have raised ? Once, brute force, directed by a few men, trampled upon the many. Here, the many are the possessors of that very force, and have almost abolished its use as a means of government. The French *gendarmerie*, the British horse-guards, the dreadful punishment of the Siberian mines, will never be copied here. Should the government resort to a standing army, that army would consist of the very forces they dread, organized, equipped and officered. Can laws save us ? With us, the very idea of legislation is reversed. Once, the law prescribed the actions and shaped the wills of the multitude ; here, the wills of the multitude prescribe and shape the law. With us, legislators study the will of the multitude, just as natural philosophers study a volcano, — not with any expectation of doing aught to the volcano, but to see what the volcano is about to do to them. While the law was clothed with majesty and power, and

the mind of the multitude was weak, then, as in all cases of a conflict between unequal forces, the law prevailed. But now, when the law is weak, and the passions of the multitude have gathered irresistible strength, it is fallacious and insane to look for security in the moral force of the law. As well might the man who has erected his dwelling upon the verge of a cliff overhanging the deep, when the equilibrium of the atmosphere is destroyed, and the elements are on fire, and every billow is excavating his foundations, expect to still the tempest by reading the Riot-act. Government and law, which ought to be the allies of justice and the everlasting foes of violence and wrong, will here be moulded into the similitude of the public mind, and will answer to it, as, in water, face answereth to face.

But, if arms themselves would be beaten in such a contest, if those who should propose the renewal of ancient severities in punishment would themselves be punished, have we not some other resource for the security of moderation and self-denial, and for the supremacy of order and law? Have not the scholars who adorn the halls of learning, and woo almost a hallowed serenity to dwell in their academic shades, — have they not, amongst all the languages which they speak, some tongue by which they can charm and pacify the mighty spirits we have evoked into being? Alas! while scholars and academists are earnestly debating such questions, as whether the *name* of error shall or shall not be spelled with the letter *u*, the *soul* of error becomes incarnate, and starts up, as from the earth, myriad-formed and ubiquitous, and stands by the side of every man, and whispers transgression into his ear, and, like the first Tempter, entices him to pluck the beautiful, but fatal fruit of some forbidden tree. Our ancestors seem to have had great faith that the alumni

of our colleges would diffuse a higher order of intelligence through the whole mass of the people, and would imbue them with a love of sobriety and a reverence for justice. But either the leaven has lost its virtue, or the lump has become too large ; for, surely, in our day, the mass is not all leavened.

I speak with reverence of the labors of another profession in their sacred calling. No other country in the world has ever been blessed with a body of clergymen, so learned, so faithful, so devout as ours. But by traditionary custom and the ingrained habits of the people, the efforts of the clergy are mainly expended upon those who have passed the forming state ; — upon adults, whose characters, as we are accustomed to express it, have become *fixed*, which being interpreted, means, that they have passed from fluid into flint. Look at the ablest pastor, in the midst of an adult congregation whose early education has been neglected. Though he be consumed of zeal, and ready to die of toil, in their behalf, yet I seem to see him, expending his strength and his years amongst them, like one solitary arborist working, single-handed and alone, in a wide forest, where there are hundreds of stooping and contorted trees, and he, striving with tackle and guy-ropes to undouble their convolutions, and to straighten the flexures in trunks whose fibres curled as they grew ; and, with his naked hand, to coax out gnarls and nodosities hard enough to glance off lightning ; — when, could he have guided and trained them while yet they were tender shoots and young saplings, he could have shaped them into beauty, a hundred in a day.

But perhaps others may look for security to the public Press, which has now taken its place amongst the organized forces of modern civilization. Probably its political department supplies more than half the reading of



the mass of our people. But, bating the point, whether, in times of public excitement, when the sobriety and thoughtfulness of wisdom, when severe and exact truth, are, more than ever else, necessary, — whether, at such times, the press is not itself liable to be inflamed by the heats it should allay, and to be perverted by the obliquities it should rectify ; — bating this point, it is still obvious that its principal efforts are expended upon one department only of all our social duties. The very existence of the newspaper press, for any useful purpose, presupposes that the people are already supplied with the elements of knowledge and inspired with the love of right ; and are therefore prepared to decide, with intelligence and honesty, those complicated and conflicting claims, which the tide of events is constantly presenting, and which, by the myriad messengers of the press, are carried to every man's fireside for his adjudication. For, of what value is it, that we have the most wisely-framed government on earth ; to what end is it, that the wisest schemes which a philanthropic statesmanship can devise, are propounded to the people, if this people has not the intelligence to understand, or the integrity to espouse them ? Each of two things is equally necessary to our political prosperity ; namely, just principles of government and administration, on one side, and a people able to understand and resolute to uphold them, on the other. Of what use is the most exquisite music ever composed by the greatest masters of the art, until you have orchestra or choir that can perform the pieces ? Pupils must thoroughly master the vocal elements, musical language must be learned, voices must be long and severely trained, or the divinest compositions of Haydn or Mozart would only set the teeth of an auditory on edge. And so must it be with our government and laws ; — the best

will be useless, unless we have a people who will appreciate and uphold them.

Again, then, I ask, with unmitigated anxiety, what institutions we now possess, that can furnish defence or barrier against the action of those propensities, which each generation brings into the world as a part of its being, and which our institutions foster and stimulate into unparalleled activity and vigor? Can any Christian man believe, that God has so constituted and so governs the human race, that it is always and necessarily to be suicidal of its earthly welfare? No! the thought is impious. The same Almighty Power which implants in our nature the germs of these terrible propensities, has endowed us also with reason and conscience and a sense of responsibility to Him; and, in his providence, he has opened a way by which these nobler faculties can be elevated into dominion and supremacy over the appetites and passions. But if this is ever done, it must be mainly done during the docile and teachable years of childhood. I repeat it, my friends, *if this is ever done, it must be mainly done during the docile and teachable years of childhood.* Wretched, incorrigible, demoniac, as any human being may ever have become, there was a time when he took the first step in error and in crime; when, for the first time, he just nodded to his fall, on the brink of ruin. Then, ere he was irrecoverably lost, ere he plunged into the abyss of infamy and guilt, he might have been recalled, as it were by the waving of the hand. Fathers, mothers, patriots, Christians! it is this very hour of peril through which our children are now passing. They know it not, but we know it; and where the knowledge is, there rests the responsibility. Society is responsible; — not society considered as an abstraction, but society as it consists of living members, which members we are. Clergymen are

responsible ; — all men who have enjoyed the opportunities of a higher education in colleges and universities are responsible, for they can convert their means, whether of time or of talent, into instruments for elevating the masses of the people. The conductors of the public press are responsible, for they have daily access to the public ear, and can infuse just notions of this high duty into the public mind. Legislators and rulers are responsible. In our country, and in our times, no man is worthy the honored name of a statesman, who does not include the highest practicable education of the people in all his plans of administration. He may have eloquence, he may have a knowledge of all history, diplomacy, jurisprudence ; and by these he might claim, in other countries, the elevated rank of a statesman ; but, unless he speaks, plans, labors, at all times and in all places, for the culture and edification of the whole people, he is not, he cannot be, an American statesman.

If this dread responsibility for the fate of our children be disregarded, how, when called upon, in the great eventful day, to give an account of the manner in which our earthly duties have been discharged, can we expect to escape the condemnation : “ Inasmuch as ye have not done it to one of the least of these, ye have not done it unto me ” ?

**LECTURE IV.**

**1840.**



## LECTURE IV.

### WHAT GOD DOES, AND WHAT HE LEAVES FOR MAN TO DO, IN THE WORK OF EDUCATION.

GENTLEMEN OF THE CONVENTION:—

WITH the coming of another year, I come to you again, asking and offering sympathy for the welfare of our children.

When I last had the pleasure of meeting a convention of the friends of Common Schools in this county, I addressed them on the subject of the *Necessity of Education*, under a government and with institutions like our own. I endeavored to demonstrate, that here, in our country and in our age, the enlightenment of the intellect, and the cultivation of the affections, of the rising generation, had not been left *optional* with us, but made *indispensable*; that the efficient and thorough education of the young was not merely *commended* to us, as a means of promoting private and public welfare, but *commanded*, as the only safeguard against such a variety and extent of calamities as no nation on earth has ever suffered.

The argument, in brief, ran thus:—All men are born into the world with many appetites and propensities of a purely animal and selfish nature. Some of these appetites and propensities are necessary to the existence of the individual, and therefore they adhere to him and remain a part of him as long as he lives; others are necessary to the continuance of the race, and therefore we must ex-

pect that they will be reproduced with every new-born generation to the end of time. Each individual, for instance, brings into the world, and carries through it, an appetite for food ; and this appetite perpetually tends to an excess ruinous to health and fatal to life,—among the vulgar running into the coarseness of gluttony, — among the refined to a no less injurious epicurism. Each individual brings into the world, and carries through it, an appetite for beverage ; and what multitudes has this desire stretched upon the “ burning marl ” of Intemperance ! All are born with a love of wealth, or, at least, of acquisition, which leads to wealth ; — and we should be unfit to live in such a world as this is, without such an innate tendency ; because, in health, we must lay by something for sickness, and in the strength of manhood something for the helplessness of children and for the feebleness of old age. Yet how easily does this propensity run out into avarice and cupidity, leading on to fraud, robbery, rapine, and all the enormities of the slave-trade, the opium-trade, the rum-trade ! So we all have a desire for the good will of others,—an instinct beautifully adapted to diffuse pleasure over all the intercourse of life. But in this country, where the rule once was that the honors of office should be awarded to merit, — *detur digniori*, — the sign seems to have been mistaken for the thing signified ; and now, whenever there is an office to be filled, a crowd of applicants throng around, more than sufficient, *in point of numbers*, to fill the vacancy for the next thousand years. Again, a certain feeling of self-estimation is absolutely essential to us all ; because, without it, every man would be awed into annihilation before the majesty of the multitude, or the glories of the visible universe. But how readily does this feeling of self-importance burst out into pride and a love of domina-

tion, and that intolerance towards the opinions of others, which does not seek to enlighten or persuade, but dogmatizes, denounces, and persecutes!

All history cries out, with all her testimonies and her admonitions, proclaiming to what excesses these innate and universal appetites may grow, when supplied with opportunities and incitements for indulgence. If men consult their propensities alone, no sacrifice ever seems too great to purchase indulgence for the lowest and meanest of them all. Each one of them is not only capable of unlimited growth, but each, also, is blind to all consequences, and demands gratification, though the next hour brings perdition as the penalty. We need not go back to patriarchal or primeval times to find a man who, because he was hungry or thirsty, would barter a glorious inheritance for a mess of pottage; or a woman who would forfeit paradise through curiosity to taste an apple. When the political destiny of his family and of all France depended upon the speed which Louis XVI. should make in his flight from Paris, he paused by the wayside to drink a bottle of Burgundy, — said coolly, that it was the best bottle he ever drank, — and suffered the scale, which held the fortunes of twenty-five millions of people, to *turn, irrevocably*, while he prolonged his gustations. To add a few more items to his inventory of conquered nations, Napoleon snatched the scythe from the hand of Death, and, forerunning the great Destroyer, he strewed the earth, from torrid sands to arctic snows, with the corse of human slain, mowed down in the morning beauty and vigor of life; and, rather than not to be emperor at all, he would have reigned the emperor of a European solitude. He played the game of war, as he played his favorite game of chess, — for the sake of triumph, — making no more account of nations than of pawns.



Pope Innocent III. founded an Inquisition, modelled after the plan of Pandemonium, that he might compel mankind to acknowledge the infallibility of his dogmas. Notwithstanding the manifest intentions of nature in making the sexes almost numerically equal, the Sultan culls nations to fill his seraglio with beauty. Did not Mark Antony forget his hard-earned fame, perfidiously abandon his faithful troops, and shut his eyes upon the vision of a kingdom, for a transient hour of voluptuousness in the arms of Cleopatra? Herod hears that a man-child is born in Judæa, who may one day endanger his throne; and forthwith, to avert that possible event, he murders all the male children in the land under two years of age; and the moment power was given, a woman, to avenge a private pique, brings in the head of John the Baptist on a charger. Even good men, — those for whose steadfastness we would almost be willing to pledge our lives, — exemplify the terrible strength of the propensities. Moses rebels; David murders; Peter, although forewarned, yet denies his Master, and forswears himself.

Now, the germs or elements of these propensities belong to us all. We possess them at birth; they abide with us till death. Vast differences exist in the power which they exert over men, owing to differences in their innate vigor; still greater differences, perhaps, result from early education. In bad men they predominate, and break out into the commission of as much iniquity as finite beings, with limited means, can compass. They exist also in good men; but, in them, they are either feebly developed, or they are bound and leashed in by pure and holy affections. By nature, they were boiling seas of passion in the breasts of Socrates and of Washington; but god-like sentiments of justice and duty and

benevolence kept down their rage, as the deep granite beneath New England's soil keeps down the central fires of the globe, and forbids earthquake or volcano to agitate her surface. When subordinated to conscience and the will of God, these propensities give ardor to our zeal and strength to our exertions ; just as the genius of man converts wind and fire from destroyers into servants.

From our very constitution, then, there is a downward gravitation forever to be overcome. The perpetual bias of our instincts is, from competency and temperance to luxury and inebriation ; from frugality to avarice ; from honest earnings to fraudulent gains ; from a laudable desire of reputation, and a reasonable self-estimate, to unhallowed ambition, and a determination to usurp the prerogative of God by writing our creeds on other men's souls. Hence these propensities require some mighty counterpoise to balance their proclivity to wrong. They must be governed, — either by the pressure of outward force, or by the supremacy of inward principle. In other countries and ages, external force, — the civil executioner, Pretorian cohorts, Janizaries, standing armies, an established priesthood, — have kept them down. The propensities and appetites of a few men have overlaid and smothered those of the rest. A few men, whom we call tyrants and monsters, having got the mastery, have prevented thousands of others from being tyrants and monsters like themselves. And although it is with entire justice that we charge the despotisms of the old world with having dwarfed and crippled whatever is great and noble in human nature ; yet it is equally true that they have dwarfed and crippled, in an equal degree, whatever is injurious and base. The Neros and Napoleons have prevented others from being Neros and Napolcons, as well as from becoming Senecas and Howards.

But with the changed institutions of this country, all is changed. Here history may be said, in familiar phrase, not merely to have turned over a new leaf, but to have opened a new set of books. With our Revolution, the current of human events was turned quite round, and set upon a new course. That external power which, theretofore, had palsied the propensities of the mass, was abolished. Instead of the old axiom, that the ruler is a lord, — a vicegerent of God, — here, to a proverb, rulers are servants. Lightly and fearfully the law lays its hand upon men ; and, should the wisest law ever framed chafe the passions or propensities of the majority, or of men who can muster a majority, they speak, and the law perishes. The will of the people must be our law, whether that will reads the moral code forwards or backwards.

Now, for one moment, compare the collected vastness of men's desires with the sum of the world's resources. Compare the demand with the supply, where the propensities are the customers. Suppose the wealth of this country were divided into fifteen million equal parts, and each man were allowed to subscribe for what number of shares he might please ; how many, think you, would have subscribed, before it would be announced that all the stock had been taken up ? Had each man permission to drop a folded ballot into the urn of fate, designating the rank and the office which he and his children should hold, would not the nominal aristocracy be tremendous ? Were each religious dogmatist and bigot authorized to write out articles of faith for universal adoption, what a mad-house of creeds and theological systems would there be ! But this is endless. All know, if every holder of a lottery ticket could name the amount of his prize, how soon the office would be bankrupt.

Now the simple question for an American, is, whether all this mighty accession of power, growing out of our free institutions, shall or shall not be placed in the hands of these ravenous and tyrannizing propensities.

From this view of the subject it is obvious, that we may become just as much worse than any other nation that ever existed, as the founders of our institutions hoped we should be better. If the propensities are to prevail, then speculation will supersede industry; violence will usurp the prerogatives of the law; the witness will be perjured upon the stand, and the guilty be rescued by forsworn jurors; the grand council-halls of the nation will be converted from an Areopagus of wise and reverend men, into a gladiatorial ring; the depositaries of public and of private trusts will administer them for personal ends; not only individuals, but States, will become reckless of their obligations; elections will be decided by bribery and corruption; and the newspaper press, which scatters its sheets over the country, thick as snow-flakes in a wintry storm, will justify whatever is wrong on one side, and vilify whatever is right on the other, until nothing that is right will be left on either. Ay, my friends, if you put your ear to the ground, can you not hear, even now, the sappers and miners at their work?

Even in the present state of society, and with all our boastings of civilization and Christianity, if all men were certain that they could, with entire impunity, indulge their wishes for a single night, what a world would be revealed to us in the morning! Should all selfish desires at once burst their confines, and swell to the extent of their capacity, it would be as though each drop of the morning dew were suddenly enlarged into an ocean.

Does any possessor of wealth, or leisure, or learning, ask, "What interest have I in the education of the multi-

tude?" I reply, You have at least this interest, that, unless their minds are enlightened by knowledge and controlled by virtuous principle, there is not, between their appetites and all you hold dear upon earth, so much as the defence of a spider's web. Without a sense of the inviolability of property, your deeds are but waste-paper. Without a sense of the sacredness of person and life, you are only a watch-dog whose baying is to be silenced, that your house may be more securely entered and plundered. Even a guilty few can destroy the peace of the virtuous many. One incendiary can burn faster than a thousand industrious workmen can build; — and this is as true of social rights as of material edifices.

Had God, then, provided no means by which this part of our nature can be controlled, we should indeed say that we had been lifted up to heaven in point of privileges, that we might, so much the more certainly, be dashed in pieces by our inevitable fall.

But we have not been inexorably subjected to such a doom. If it befalls us, it befalls us with our own consent. Means of escape are vouchsafed; and not of escape only, but of infinite peace and joy.

The world is to be rescued through physical, intellectual, moral and religious action upon the young. I say, *upon the young*, for the number of grown men who ever change character for the better is far too small to lay the foundation of any hope of a general reform. After the age of twenty-five, — or even after that of twenty-one years, — few men commence a course of virtue or abandon one of vice; — and even when this is done, its cause almost invariably dates back to some early impression, which for many years has lain dormant in the mind. Let that period be passed, and, ordinarily, you must wait for a death-bed repentance; and often will your waiting be in

vain even for that. By the time the age of manhood has been reached, the course of life has usually acquired a momentum which propels it onwards, substantially in the same direction, to its close.

Now for the great end of ransoming the human race from its brutish instincts and its demoniac indulgences, let us see what the benevolence of God does for us, in the common course of nature and providence, and what His wisdom has left for us to do ; — because it is obvious, that He may go on doing his part of the work, for a hundred, or for a thousand generations, and yet, unless we also do our part, the work never will be done. And it may be further remarked, that while He does His part, and we neglect ours, the work, so far from being half done, will be worse than undone. Our folly perverting His goodness will be like an unskilful hand operating upon an exquisitely wrought machine. But His part of the work, — that is, the general course of nature and providence, — will go on, whether we co-operate or oppose. It is not for us, therefore, to say with the Psalmist, “Awake ! why sleepest *Thou*, O Lord !” for it is not the Lord who sleeps, but it is we ourselves.

The general truth here stated may find its illustrations and analogies in all the departments of nature. I will give only a single example.

The husbandman is promised that seed-time and harvest shall not fail ; and, in pursuance of that promise, the fountains of the clouds are opened to saturate the earth with fatness ; the sun shoots a genial warmth into the soil, and the rich mould and the richer atmosphere are ready for a magical transformation into verdure and flowers and fruit ; — but unless the husbandman knows how to scatter the seed at the right time, and to cultivate the tender plant in the right way, in vain shall the fields be visited by the reapers.

For all Africa and for all Asia, nature has done her part of the work, for thousands of years ; and yet the miserable generations rise and suffer and perish, like so many swarms of insects on the banks of the Nile or the Ganges. Nor does nature show any symptoms of impatience at their delay ; — with awful tranquillity, she waits for their part of the work to be done.

The first thing done for us, in the course of nature and providence, is the creation of children in a state of entire ignorance and receptiveness. Were children born with characters full-formed, — with minds inflexibly made up on all possible subjects, and armed at all points for their defence ; — were babes, as soon as they can speak, to start up into ferocious partisans and fanatics, — then nature would have done the whole work, and left nothing for us to do ; — nay, in that case, she would have rendered it impossible for us to interfere, to any practical purpose. But it depends hardly less upon the language of the household, which, of all the tongues upon earth, the child shall most readily speak, than it does upon the opinions of the household, what opinions, on a great variety of the most important subjects, he shall adopt. Hence we find, almost without exception, the children of Pagans to be Pagans ; of Mahommedans, Mahommedans ; and of Catholics and Protestants, to be respectively Catholics and Protestants. It depends upon residence in a particular latitude and longitude, what natural objects a child shall become acquainted with ; and one who is born in the frigid zone will be as little accustomed to the social habits as to the natural productions of the torrid. And finally, it depends upon the examples and the institutions, amidst which a child is reared, what shall be his earliest, and probably his most enduring impressions, respecting the great realities of existence.

Here, then, is an ample sphere for the exertion of our influence. We should transfuse our best sentiments, transplant our best ideas and habits, into the receptive soul of childhood. It is our duty to separate the right from the wrong, in our own minds and conduct, and to incorporate the former only in the minds and conduct of children. Then the force of habit will aid them in doing those duties, whose performance, in our own case, habit may have opposed. It is an admirable proverb which says, "Happy is the man whose habits are his friends." Could we ever know that we are infallibly right on all the great questions which pertain to our temporal and eternal destiny, then it might be our duty to inculcate our views authoritatively and dogmatically upon children, and to insist upon their acquiescence and conformity ; but as we can never know in this life, with absolute and positive certainty, that we are right on such mighty themes, it becomes our first and highest duty to awaken in their hearts the sentiment of truth, to inculcate the love and the pursuit of it, wherever it may be found, and to teach them to abandon every thing else, even their own most cherished opinions, for its sake. That is the worst of sacrilege which creates a belief in a child's soul that any opinion is better than truth.

The entire helplessness of children, for a long period after birth, is another circumstance not within our control, and one deserving of great moral consideration. In one respect, children may be said to possess their greatest power, at this, the feeblest period of their existence ; — a power which, — however paradoxical it may seem, — originates in helplessness, and therefore diminishes just in proportion as they gain strength. It was most beautifully said by Dr. Thomas Brown, that after a child has grown to manhood, "he cannot, even then, by the most



imperious orders, which he addresses to the most obsequious slaves, exercise an authority more commanding than that, which, in the very first hours of his life, when a few indistinct cries and tears were his only language, he exercised irresistibly over hearts, of the very existence of which he was ignorant." It may be added that, under no terror of a despot's rage; under no bribe of honors or of wealth; under no fear of torture or of death, have greater struggles been made, or greater sacrifices endured, than for those helpless creatures, who, for all purposes of immediate availability, are so utterly worthless. All, unless it be the lowest savages, fly to the succor and melt at the sufferings of infancy. God has so adapted their unconscious pleadings to our uncontrollable impulses, that they, in their weakness, have the prerogative of command, and we, in our strength, the instinct of obedience. It was the highest wisdom, then, not to intrust the fate of infancy to any volitions or notions of expediency, on our part; but, at once, by a sovereign law of the constitution, to make our knowledge and power submissive to their inarticulate commands.

In proportion as this power of helplessness wanes, the child begins to excite our interest and sympathy, by a thousand personal attractions and forms of loveliness. The sweetness of lips that never told a lie; the smile that celebrates the first-born emotions of love; the intense gaze at bright colors and striking forms, gathering together the elements from whose full splendor and gorgeousness Raphael painted and Homer wrote; the plastic imagination, fusing the solid substances of the earth, to be recast into shapes of beauty; — what Rothschild, what Cræsus has wealth that can purchase these!

How cheap and how beautiful, too, are the joys of childhood! Paley, in speaking of the evidences of the

goodness of God, says, there is always some "bright spot in the prospect;" — some "single example," "by which each man finds himself more convinced than by all others put together. I seem, for my own part," he adds, "to see the benevolence of the Deity more clearly in the pleasures of young children, than in any thing in the world. The pleasures of grown persons may be reckoned partly of their own procuring, especially if there has been any industry, or contrivance, or pursuit to come at them; or, if they are founded, like music, painting, &c., upon any qualifications of their own acquiring. But the pleasures of a healthy infant are so manifestly provided for it by another, and the benevolence of the provision is so unquestionable, that every child I see at its sport affords, to my mind, a kind of sensible evidence of the finger of God, and of the disposition which directs it." At the age of two or three years, before a child has ever seen a jest-book, whence comes his glad and gladdening laughter, — at once costless and priceless? Whence comes that flow of joy, that gurgles and gushes up from his heart, like water flung from a spouting-spring? That bright-haired boy, how came he as full of music and poetry as a singing-book? Who imprisoned a dancing-school in each of his toes, which sends him from the earth with bounding and rebounding step? What an *Æolian* harp the wind finds in him! Nor music alone does it awaken in his bosom; for, let but its feathery touch play upon his locks, or fan his cheek, and gravitation lets go of him, — he floats and sails away, as though his body were a feather and his soul the zephyr that played with it. Indeed, half his discords come, because the winds, the buds, the flowers, the light, — so many fingers of the hand of nature, — are all striving to play different tunes upon him at the same time. These delights are born of the exquisite

workmanship of the Creator, before the ignorance and wickedness of men have had time to mar it ; — and they flow out spontaneously and unconsciously, like a bird's song, or a flower's beauty.

Even to those who have no children of their own, — unless they are, as the apostle expresses it, “without natural affection,” — even to those, the wonderful growth of a child, in knowledge, in power, in affection, makes all other wonders tame. Who ever saw a wretch so heathenish, so dead, that the merry song or shout of a group of gleeful children did not galvanize the misanthrope into an exclamation of joy ? What orator or poet has eloquence that enters the soul with such quick and subtle electricity, as a child's tear of pity for suffering, or his frown of indignation at wrong ? A child is so much more than a miracle, that its growth and future blessedness are the only things worth working miracles for. God did not make the child for the sake of the earth, nor for the sake of the sun ; but he made the earth and the sun, as a footstool and a lamp, to sustain his steps and to enlighten his path, during a few only of the earliest years of his immortal existence.

You perceive, my friends, that in speaking of the loveliness of children, and their power to captivate and subdue all hearts to a willing bondage, I have used none but masculine pronouns, — referring only to the stronger and hardier sex ; — for by what glow and melody of speech can I sketch the vision of a young and beautiful daughter, with all her bewildering enchantments ? By what cunning art can the coarse material of words be refined and subtilized into color, and motion, and music, till they shall paint her bloom of health, “celestial, rosy red ;” till they shall trace those motions that have the grace and the freedom of flame, and echo the sweet and affectionate tones

of a spirit yet warm from the hand that created it? What less than a divine power could have strung the living chords of her voice to pour out unbidden and exulting harmonies? What fount of sacred flame kindles and feeds the light that gleams from the pure depths of her eye, and flushes her cheek with the hues of a perpetual morning, and shoots auroras from her beaming forehead? Oh! profane not this last miracle of heavenly workmanship with sight or sound of earthly impurity. Keep vestal vigils around her inborn modesty; and let the quickest lightnings blast her tempter. She is Nature's *mosaic* of charms. Looked upon as we look upon an object in Natural History, — upon a gazelle or a hyacinth, — she is a magnet to draw pain out of a wounded breast. While we gaze upon her, and press her in ecstasy to our bosom, we almost tremble, lest suddenly she should unfurl a wing and soar to some better world. But, my friends, with what emotions ought we to tremble, when our thoughts pass from the present to the future, — when we ponder on the possibilities of evil as well as of good, which now, all unconsciously to herself, lie hidden in her spirit's coming history, — now hidden, but to be revealed soon as her tiny form shall have expanded to the stature and her spirit to the power of womanhood! When we reflect, on the one hand, that this object, almost of our idolatry, may go through life, solacing distress, ministering to want, redeeming from guilt, making vice mourn the blessedness it has lost because it was not virtue; and, as she walks holy and immaculate before God and before men, some aerial anthem shall seem to be forever hymning peaceful benedictions around her; or, on the other hand, that, from the dark fountains of a corrupted heart, she shall send forth a secret, subtle poison, compared with which all earthly venoms are healthful; — when we reflect

that, so soon, she may become one or the other of all this, the pen falls, the tongue falters and fails, while the hopeful, fearful heart rushes from thanksgiving to prayer, and from prayer to thanksgiving.

But the most striking and wonderful provision which is made, in the accustomed course of nature and providence, for the welfare of children, remains to be mentioned. Reflect, for a moment, my friends, how it has come to pass, that the successive generations of children, from Adam to ourselves, — each one of which was wholly incapable of providing for itself for a single day, — how has it come to pass, that these successive generations have been regularly sustained and continued to the present day, without intermission or failure? The Creator did not leave these over-returning exigencies without adequate provision; — for how universal and how strong is the love of offspring in the parental breast! This love is the grand resource, — the complement of all other forces. We are accustomed to call the right of self-preservation the first law of nature; yet how this love of offspring overrules and spurns it! To rescue her child, the mother breaks through a wall of fire, or plunges into the fathomless flood; — or, if it must be consumed in the flames, or lie down in the deep, she clasps it to her bosom and perishes with it. This maternal impulse does not so much subjugate self, as forget that there is any such thing as self; and, were the mother possessed of a thousand lives, for the welfare of her offspring she would squander them all. Mourning, disconsolate mothers, bewailing lost children! Behold the vast procession, which reaches from the earliest periods of the race to those who now stand bending and weeping over the diminutive graves which swallow up their hopes; and what a mighty attestation do they give to the strength of that instinct which

God has implanted in the maternal breast! Nor is it in the human race only that this love of offspring bears sway. All the higher orders of animated nature are subjected to its control. It inspires the most timid races of the brute creation with boldness, and melts the most ferocious of them into love. To express its strength and watchfulness, the hare is said to sleep with ever-open eye on the form where her young repose; and the pelican to tear open her breast with her own beak, and pour out her life-blood to feed her nestlings. The famishing eagle grasps her prey in her talons and carries it to her lofty nest; and though she screams with hunger, yet she will not taste it until her young are satisfied; and the gaunt lioness bears the spoils of the forest to her cavern, nor quenches the fire of her own parched lips until her whelps have feasted. And thus, from the parent stock, — from the Adam and Eve, whether of animals or of men, who came into the world full-formed from the hands of their Creator, — down through all successive generations, to the present dwellers upon earth, has this invisible but mighty instinct of the parents' heart brooded and held its jealous watch over their young, nurturing their weakness and instructing their ignorance, until the day of their maturity, when it became their turn to re-affirm this great law of nature towards their offspring.

This, my friends, is not sentimentality. It is the contemplation of one of the divinest features in the Economy of Providence. It was for the wisest ends that the Creator ordained, that as the offspring of each, "after its kind," should be brought into life, — then, in that self-same hour, without volition or forethought on their part, — there should flame up in the breast of the parent, as from the innermost recesses of nature, a new and overmastering impulse, — an impulse which enters the soul

like a strong invader, conquering, revolutionizing, transforming old pains into pleasures and old pleasures into pains, until its great mission should be accomplished. On this link the very existence of the races was suspended. Hence Divine foreknowledge made it strong enough to sustain them all; — for in vain would the fountain of life have been opened in the maternal breast, if a deeper fountain of love had not been opened in her heart.

Would you more adequately conceive what an insupportable wretchedness and torment the rearing of children would be, if, instead of being rendered delightful by these endearments of parental love, it had been merely commanded by law, and enforced by pains and penalties; — would you, I say, more fully conceive this difference; — contrast the feelings of a slave-breeder, (a wretch abhorred by God and man!) contrast, I say, the feelings of a slave-breeder, who raises children for the market, with the feelings of the slave-mother, in whose person this sacred law of parental love is outraged. If one of these doomed children, from what cause soever, becomes puny and sickly, and gives good promise of defeating the cupidity that called it into life, with what bitter emotions does the master behold it! He thinks of investments sunk, of unmerchantable stock on hand, of the profit-and-loss account; and perhaps he is secretly meditating schemes for preventing further expenditures by bringing the hopeless concern to a violent close. But what an inexpressible joy does the abused mother find in watching over and caressing it, and cheating the hostile hours; — and, (for such is the impartiality of nature,) if she can beguile it of one pain, or win one note of gladness from its sorrow-stricken frame, her dusky bosom thrills with as keen a rapture as ever dilated the breast of a royal mother, when, beneath a canopy and within curtains of silk and gold, she nursed the heir of a hundred kings.

In civilized and Christianized man, this natural instinct is exalted into a holy sentiment. At first, it is true, there springs up this blind passion of parental love, yearning for the good of the child, delighted by its pleasures, tortured by its pains. But this vehement impulse, strong as it is, is not left to do its work alone. It summons and supplicates all the nobler faculties of the soul to become its counsellors and allies. It invokes the aid of conscience; and conscience urges to do all and suffer all, for the child's welfare. For every default, conscience expostulates, rebukes, mourns, threatens, chastises. That is selfishness, and not conscience, in the parent, which says to the child, "You owe your being and your capacities to me." Conscience makes the parent say, "I owe my being and my capacities to you. It is I who have struck out a spark which is to burn with celestial effulgence, or glare with baleful fires. It is I who have evoked, out of nothingness, unknown and incalculable capacities of happiness and of misery; and all that can be done by mortal means is mine to do."

Nor does this love of offspring stop with conscience. It enlists, in its behalf, the general feeling of benevolence, — benevolence, that god-like sentiment which rejoices in the joys and suffers in the sufferings of others. The soul of the truly benevolent man does not seem to reside much in its own body. Its life, to a great extent, is the mere reflex of the lives of others. It migrates into their bodies, and, identifying its existence with their existence, finds its own happiness in increasing and prolonging their pleasures, in extinguishing or solacing their pains. And of all places into which the whole heart of benevolence ever migrates, it is in the child, where it finds the readiest welcome, and where it loves best to prolong its residence.

So the voice of another sentiment, — a sentiment



whose commands are more authoritative than those of any other which ever startles the slumbering faculties from their guilty repose, — I mean the religious sentiment, the sense of duty to God, — this, too, comes in aid of the parental affection ; and it appeals to the whole nature, in language awful as that which made the camp of the Israelites tremble at the foot of Sinai. This sense of duty to God compels the parent to contemplate the child in his moral and religious relations. It says, “ However different you may now be from your child, — you strong, and he weak ; you learned, and he ignorant ; your mind capacious of the mighty events of the past and the future, and he alike ignorant of yesterday and to-morrow, — yet, in a few short years, all this difference will be lost, and one of the greatest remaining differences between yourself and him will be that which your own conduct towards him shall have caused or permitted. If, then, God is Truth, — if God is Love, — teach the child above all things to seek for Truth, and to abound in Love.”

So much, then, my friends, is done, in the common and established course of nature, for the welfare of our children. Nature supplies a perennial force, unexhausted, inexhaustible, re-appearing whenever and wherever the parental relation exists. We, then, who are engaged in the sacred cause of education, are entitled to look upon all parents as having given hostages to our cause ; and, just as soon as we can make them see the true relation in which they and their children stand to this cause, they will become advocates for its advancement, more ardent and devoted than ourselves. We hold every parent by a bond more strong and faithful than promises or oaths, — by a Heaven-established relationship, which no power on earth can dissolve. Would parents furnish us with a record of their secret consciousness, how large a portion

of those solemn thoughts and emotions, which throng the mind in the solitude of the night-watches, and fill up their hours of anxious contemplation, would be found to relate to the welfare of their offspring! Doubtless the main part of their most precious joys comes from the present or prospective well-being of their children; — and oh! how often would they account all gold as dross, and fame as vanity, and life as nothing, could they bring back the look of the cradle's innocence upon the confined reprobate!

With some parents, of course, these pleasures and pains constitute a far greater share of the good or ill of life than with others; — and with mothers generally far more than with fathers. We have the evidence of this superior attachment of the mother, in those supernatural energies which she will put forth to rescue her child from danger; we know it by the vigils and fasting she will endure to save it from the pangs of sickness, or to ward off the shafts of death; — when, amid all the allurements of the world, her eye is fastened, and her heart dwells upon but one spot in it; we know it by her agonies, when, at last, she consigns her child to an early grave; we know it by the tear which fills her eye, when, after the lapse of years, some stranger repeats, by chance, its beloved name; and we know it by the crash and ruin of the intellect sometimes produced by the blow of bereavement; — all these are signatures written by the finger of God upon human nature itself, by which we know that parents are constituted and predestined to be the friends of education. They will, they must be its friends, as soon as increasing intelligence shall have demonstrated to them the indissoluble relation which exists between Education and Happiness.

I have now spoken, my friends, of what is done for us, in the accustomed course of nature and providence, as it regards the well-being of our children. But here I come to the point of divergence. Here I must speak of our part of the work; of those duties which the Creator has devolved upon ourselves. Here, therefore, it becomes my duty to expose the greatest of all mistakes, committed in regard to the greatest of all subjects, and followed by proportionate calamities.

Two grand qualifications are equally necessary in the education of children, — Love and Knowledge. Without love, every child would be regarded as a nuisance, and cast away as soon as born. Without knowledge, love will ruin every child. Nature supplies the love; but she does not supply the knowledge. The love is spontaneous; the knowledge is to be acquired by study and toil, by the most attentive observation and the profoundest reflection. Here, then, lies the fatal error: — parents rest contented with the feeling of love; they do not devote themselves to the acquisition of that knowledge which is necessary to guide it. Year after year, thousands and tens of thousands indulge the delightful sentiment, but never spend an hour in studying the conditions which are indispensable to its gratification.

In regard to the child's physical condition, — its growth, and health, and length of life, — these depend, in no inconsiderable degree, on the health and self-treatment of the mother before its birth. After birth, they depend not only on the vitality and temperature of the air it breathes, on dress, and diet, and exercise, but on certain proportions and relations which these objects bear to each other. Now the tenderest parental love, — a love which burns, like incense upon an altar, for an idolized child, for a quarter of a century, or for half a century, — will

never teach the mother that there are different ingredients in the air we breathe, — that one of them sustains life, that another of them destroys life, — that every breath we draw changes the life-sustaining element into the life-destroying one; and therefore that the air which is to be respired must be perpetually renewed. Love will never instruct the mother what materials or textures of clothing have the proper conducting or non-conducting qualities for different climates, or for different seasons of the year. Love is no chemist or physiologist, and therefore will never impart to the mother any knowledge of the chemical or vital qualities of different kinds of food, of the nature or functions of the digestive organs, of the susceptibilities of the nervous system, nor, indeed, of any other of the various functions on which health and life depend. Hence, the most affectionate but ignorant mother, during the cold nights of winter, will visit the closet-like bed-chamber of her darling, calk up every crevice and cranny, smother him with as many integuments as incase an Egyptian mummy, close the door of his apartment, and thus inflict upon him a consumption, — born of love. Or she will wrap nice comforters about his neck, until, in some glow of perspiration, he flings them off, and dies of the croup. Or she will consult the infinite desires of a child's appetite, instead of the finite powers of his stomach, and thus pamper him, until he languishes into a life of suffering and imbecility, or becomes stupefied and besotted by one of sensual indulgence.

A mother has a first-born child, whom she dotes upon to distraction, but, through some fatal error in its management, occasioned by her ignorance, it dies in the first, beautiful, budding hour of childhood, — nipped like the sweet blossoms of spring by an untimely frost. Another is committed to her charge, and in her secret heart she

says, "I will love this better than the first." But it is not better love that the child needs; it is more knowledge.

It is the vast field of ignorance pertaining to these subjects, in which quackery thrives and fattens. No one who knows any thing of the organs and functions of the human system, and of the properties of those objects in nature to which that system is related, can hear a quack descant upon the miraculous virtues of his nostrums, or can read his advertisements in the newspapers, — wherein, fraudulently towards man, and impiously towards God, he promises to sell an "Elixir of Life," or "The Balm of Immortality," or "Resurrection Pills," — without contempt for his ignorance, or detestation of his guilt. Could the quack administer his nostrums to the great enemy, Death, then, indeed, *we* might expect to live forever.

And what is the consequence of this excess of love and lack of knowledge on the part of the parent? More than one-fifth part, — almost a fourth part, — of all the children who are born, die before attaining the age of one year. A fifth part have died before a seventieth part of the term of existence has been reached! What would the farmer or the shepherd say, if he should lose one-fifth part of his lambs or his kids before a seventieth part of their natural term of life had been reached? And before the age of five years, more than a third part of all who are born of our race have returned again to the earth, — the great majority of them having died of that most fatal and wide-spread of all epidemics, — unenlightened parental love. What an inconceivable amount of anxiety for the health and life of children might be prevented; how much of the agony of bereavement might be saved; how much joy might be won from beholding childhood's rosy beauty and bounding health, if parents, especially

mothers, would study such works as those of Doctor Combe, on the Principles of Physiology, as applied to Health and Education, and on Digestion and Dietetics; of Doctor Brigham, on Mental Excitement; or Miss Sedgwick's Means and Ends; and, (if they are to stand at all in the way of mastering this knowledge,) throw Cooper, and Bulwer, and Marryatt, and Boz, into the grate, or under the fore-stick!

When we ascend from the management of the body to the direction and culture of the intellectual and moral nature, the calamitous consequences of ignorance are as much greater, as spirit is more valuable than matter, — because the mischief wrought by unskillfulness is always in proportion to the value of the material wrought upon. In regard to the child's advancement in knowledge and virtue, with what spontaneity and vigor do the parental impulses spring up! They seek, they yearn, they pray for his welfare, for his worldly renown, for his moral excellence, — that he may grow, not only in stature, but in favor with God and man. These parental affections watch over him; they stand like an angelic guard around him; they agonize for his growth in the right, for his redemption from the wrong. But all these affections are blind impulses. They do not know, they cannot devise a single measure, whereby to accomplish the object they would die to attain. Love of children has no knowledge of the four different temperaments, — the fibrous, the sanguine, the nervous, the lymphatic, — or of the different combinations of them, and how different a course of treatment each one of them, or the predominance of either, demands. Love of children does not know how to command, in order to insure the habit of prompt and willing obedience, — obedience, in the first place, to parental authority, afterwards to the dictates of conscience when

that faculty is developed, and to the laws of God when those laws are made known to them. Love of children does not know in what manner, or in what measure, to inflict punishment; or how to reconcile inflexibility of principle with changes in circumstances. It does not understand the favorable moments when the mind is fitted to receive the seeds of generous, noble, devout sentiments; or when, on the other hand, not even the holiest principles should be mentioned. All this invaluable, indispensable knowledge comes from reading, from study, from observation, from reflection, from forethought; — it never comes, it never can come, from the blind instinct or feeling of parental love. Hence, as we all know, those parents do not train up their children best who love them most. Nay, if the love be not accompanied with knowledge, it precipitates the ruin of its object. This result can be explained in a single word. The child has appetites and desires, without knowledge. These, if unrestrained, all tend to excess. They demand too much of food, dress, liberty, authority, and so forth. The child has a throng of selfish propensities, which, if unbalanced by the higher sentiments, prompt to acts of disrespect, pride, cruelty, injustice. Now the dictate of unintelligent love in the parent is, to assist the child in realizing all its wants. Hence the parent's power supplies the child's weakness in procuring the means for gratifying its excessive desires; and thus, that love which nature designed as its blessing, becomes its curse. What intelligent observer has not seen many a parent run, at the first call of a child, remove all obstructions from his path, and hasten his slow steps onward to ruin!

Solomon says, — explicitly and without qualification, — “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, HE WILL NOT DEPART FROM IT.” Now, if this be

true, then it is a short and a clear syllogism, that if *men* do depart from the way in which they should go, they were not, *as children*, trained up in it. Or, take the saying only as a general proposition, — one to be applied to the great majority of cases, — and it equally follows that if men, *generally*, do depart from the way in which they should go, then, *generally*, they were not trained up in it. Under the loosest construction, Solomon must have meant, that there are powers, faculties, instrumentalities, graciously vouchsafed by Heaven to man, by which, if discovered, and applied to the processes of education, children, generally, when they become men, will go and do, and love to go and do, as they ought to go and do. No latitudinarianism of interpretation can escape this inference.

And yet, with this authority from the Scriptures before us, as to what may be done, how often does the misconduct of children bring down the gray hairs of parents with sorrow to the grave! With every generation, there re-appear amongst us, the arts of fraud, the hand of violence, and the feet that are swift to shed blood. Nor are flagitious deeds and abandoned lives confined to families alone, where the treatment of children, by their parents, is characterized by gross ignorance and heathenism. Such cases, it is true, abound, and in such numbers, too, as almost to laugh to scorn our claims, as a people, to civilization and Christianity. But how often do we see children issuing from the abodes of rational and pious parents, where a burning love, a hallowed zeal, a life-consuming toil, have been expended upon them, — of parents who have bedewed the nightly pillow with tears, and, morning and evening, have wrestled with the angel of mercy to bring down blessings upon their heads, — how often do we see these children bursting madly forth,



and rushing straight onward to some precipice of destruction ; and though parents and kindred and friends pursue, and strive to intercept them ere they reach the brink of ruin ; and gather in long array and stand with outstretched arms and imploring voice, to arrest their fatal career, — yet, gathering strength and swiftness, the victims rush by, and plunge into the abyss of perdition ! Yet, if there is any truth in the declaration of Solomon, these victims, — at least most of them, — might have been saved, and would have been saved, had the knowledge of the parents been equal to their love. God grant that in saying these things, I may not shoot an arrow of pain through any parent's heart ; — still more fervently do I say, God grant that a timely consideration of these truths may turn aside the arrows of pain from every parental breast !

The instinctive love which parents feel for their children is only one of a large class of natural desires, — all of which are subjected to the same conditions. Nature, in each case, supplies the desire, but she leaves it to us to acquire the knowledge which is necessary to guide it. She leaves it to us so to control and regulate the desire, that, in the long-run, it may receive the highest amount of gratification. This truth is susceptible of most extensive illustration. Time, however, will allow me to adduce only a few analogies.

All men are born with a desire for food, but they are born without any knowledge of agriculture, or of the arts or implements of the chase, by means of which food can be procured. The lowest grade of savages feel a natural hunger or thirst as keen as that of the highest orders of civilized man. But the savage has no knowledge how to rear the luxuries of the garden, the orchard, the grain-field, the pasture, or the fold. Hence he subsists upon such uncooked roots or unsodden flesh as can be found

or caught in the neighborhood of his cave or wigwam. But knowledge — an excited and cultivated intellect — has been at work for civilized man ; and, in obedience to its command, the earth teems with delicious fruits, the valleys abound with fatness, the ocean becomes tributary ; in fine, all the fields of nature are converted into one great laboratory to prepare sweets and fragrance and flavor for his voluptuous table. We derive the appetite, perfect and full-grown, from our Maker ; but we are left to discover for ourselves the means and processes by which this appetite can best be gratified. The result of all our knowledge on this subject is expressed in the common proverb, that the temperate man is the greatest epicure ; — that is, the greatest possible amount of gratification from eating and drinking will be enjoyed by the temperate man ; — a conclusion, the very opposite of that which the appetite itself suggests.

So in regard to a love of beauty. Nature confers this sentiment, in a greater or less degree, upon all the race. But the cultivation of it, the preparation of objects to gratify it, — architecture, painting, sculpture, — these come through art and genius, by the application of a knowledge of our own acquiring. The Indian bridegroom, stung with love, and seeking to beautify the tawny idol of his affections, besmears her face with red or yellow ochre ; he tattoos her skin, and for jewels suspends a string of bears' claws over her sooty bosom. In consequence of possessing a somewhat higher knowledge, our sense of beauty is elevated perhaps two or three degrees above that of the barbarian. Hence we seek to clothe a beloved object with fine linen, and Tyrian purple, and silken stuffs of colors rich and costly ; and instead of the claws of bears, we adorn her with carcanets of pearl and diamonds. When mankind shall be blessed with that

purser and higher knowledge which shall identify the types of beauty with those of excellence, then will our ideal, advancing with the advancing light, demand, as the price of its admiration, richer ornaments than Ophir or Golconda can supply; — it will demand the bloom and elasticity of perfect health, manners born of artlessness and enthusiasm, and a countenance so inscribed with the records of pure thoughts and benevolent deeds, as to be one beaming, holy hieroglyph of love and duty. Then will our exalted sense of beauty repel the aggression of foreign ornaments.

So the love of property, to which for another purpose I have before referred, is common to all. There is an inborn desire for the conveniences, the comforts, the elegances, the independence, which property confers. But men are not born with one particle of knowledge respecting the means or instruments by which property can be acquired. And we all know how certainly a man, who acts from the blind desire, without any knowledge of the appropriate means, brings ruin upon himself and family. How much knowledge is requisite, what long courses of previous study and apprenticeship are demanded, to fit men for the learned professions, for commerce, manufactures and the mechanic arts! Who would consign his goods to a merchant who knows nothing of the laws of trade, of demand and supply, of eligible markets, seasons, and so forth? What a variety and extent of preliminary knowledge respecting modes and processes must be obtained, before the fabrics of the artisan or the manufacturer can be produced. Suppose a young man of twenty or twenty-five years of age, to begin to rear a family of children. Suppose him, at the same time, to inherit a hundred thousand dollars in money. He seeks to gratify his parental instinct, by educating his children; and he

seeks also to enlarge his estate, by purchasing and carrying on a manufacturing establishment ; — but neither on the subject of education nor of manufactures, has he ever thought, or read, or sought instruction. How long, think you, my friends, would it be, before the most perfect machinery ever made by human skill would be wrenched, or crushed, or torn in pieces, under his ignorant management ; the best of cottons or woollens spoiled, and his whole fortune dissipated ? Without some knowledge of the art of manufacturing, he would hardly know which way to turn the wheels of his machinery ; he would not know in what quantities to feed it, or in what order and succession to carry the material from part to part. Without knowledge, also, he will conduct the education of his children quite as ruinously as his pecuniary investments. If he is unacquainted with the different temperaments which his children may have, — the lymphatic, the sanguine, the nervous, the fibrous, — he will make as great mistakes in regard to diet and exercise, to intellectual and moral training, to mental stimulus or restraint, as though he should attempt to weave hemp upon a silk-loom. If he does not know in what order nature develops the faculties, one after another, he will commit the same error, as though he should put the raw material, in the first instance, on the finishing machine, and carry it, last of all, through the preliminary stages. If you will allow me to carry on the comparison, I will add, that, to feed machinery, in any stage of the work, with such an over-quantity of stock as clogs and chokes it, is only the parallel of that common misjudgment which gives to children longer lessons than they can learn. So, to ply the minds of children with improper motives, in order to accelerate their progress, is a far greater mistake than it would be to drive machinery by doubling the head of water or the

power of steam, until every shaft should be twisted, every band stretched, and every pinion loosened, in it. Such a silly adventurer would bring depravation and ruin alike upon the mechanical and the educational departments of his enterprise.

Here lies the great and the only difference between the cases. When material fabrics or commodities are spoiled by a bungler, — when ore is turned into dross in the smelting, when garments are ruined in the making, when a house will not stand, or a ship will not sail, — we see what mischief has been done, what materials have been wasted. We understand enough of the subject to know what should have been done, and to compare it with what has been done. But no reflecting man can doubt, for a moment, that the minds of our children, — those treasures of inestimable value, — are corrupted and devastated by every ignorant parent, in a degree at least equal to what the most precious earthly materials would be, in the hands of the rudest workman.

But it is not every child, nor even a majority of children, who, with any propriety, can be compared to mechanical structures, or to those pliant and ductile materials that are wrought into beautiful forms by the skill of the artisan. Children formed in the prodigality of nature, gifted to exert strong influences upon the race, are not passive ; — they are endued with vital and efficient forces of their own. Their capacious and fervid souls were created to melt and recast opinions, codes, communities, as crude ores are melted and purified in the furnace. To the sensitive and resilient natures of such children, an ungentle touch is a sting ; a hot word is a living coal. By mere innate, spontaneous force, their vehement spirits rise to such a pitch of exaltation, that, if all bland and sedative arts do not assuage them, if all wisdom does not

guide them, they become scourges instead of blessings to mankind. Such natures are among the richest gifts of Heaven to the race, — created for great emergencies and enterprises, always finding or making occasions for deeds of immortality; — like Moses, scorning the power of kings and giving deliverance to a captive nation; or like Paul, speaking undaunted in the face of courts, and making potentates tremble. Yet how few parents know, or have ever sought to know, how to manage these impetuous and fiery souls! How many parents regard physical strength as the only antagonist and corrective of spiritual strength, — ignorant of the truth that, to a great extent, they are incommensurable quantities. How few reflect that a child may be as much stronger than the parents in his passions, as the parents are stronger than the child, in their limbs; that wisdom in them, therefore, is the only true correlative of will in him; and that prudence and discretion in the arrangement of circumstances beforehand, are, in thousands of cases, the effectual preventive of the necessity of punishment afterwards. If a man rashly undertakes to use materials which are liable to spontaneous combustion, without any knowledge of the conditions which are sure to generate the flame, ought he to complain of the laws of nature, or of his own ignorance, when he suffers a conflagration? We know that a man of intelligence and circumspection will spend a life in the manufacture or the transportation of gunpowder, without an accident; while a stupid clodpoll will celebrate his first day's service by an explosion.

My friends, is it not incredible that any parent should ever attempt to manage and direct that mighty force, — a child's soul, — without having first sought to acquire some knowledge of its various attributes, of its upward

and its downward bending faculties, of the reciprocal relations existing between it and the world into which it has been introduced, and of the manner in which its marvellous capacities may be developed into harmony and beauty, and shaped into perfection. — Look at that every-day reality in life, — which, were it not so familiar, we should perceive to be most delightful sight in this sorrowing world, — that of a young mother clasping her first-born infant to her breast, while the light and shade that cross her countenance reveal the infinite hopes and fears that alternate within. What is her life of ease, pleasure, luxury, comfort, her lot in life, but she would not barter, could she with a sign of her heaven, that her child should grow to manhood, and as it should wax strong in body, should grow also in grace before God and man? Yet, was there any thing in her own education, is there any thing in her daily pursuits, in her tone and habits of society, which lead her to lay hold upon the promise, that if she brings up her child in the way he should go, when he is old he will not depart from it? If the hospitalities of her house are to be rendered to a distinguished guest, — nay, if she is even to prepare a reception of cakes for a stranger, she has not to examine some cookery-book, or some household guide, or even she should convert her rich ingredients into a more homely compound; but without ever having read one book on the subject of education, without ever having devoted one hour upon this great theme, without ever having sought one conversation with an able person, without even a mother asks so to enlighten the mind of her dear child, elements of instruction for that child is wanting, — she shall be fitted to discharge all duties which are laid upon her as a mother. When the young mother has devoted to work the minutes of her waking hours for household duty, does she not spend

the sampler, prepared in her juvenile days, that every stitch may be set with regularity and in order? Yet this same mother surrenders herself to blind ignorance and chance when she is to engrave immortal characters upon the eternal tablets of the soul. To embroider an earthly garment, there must be knowledge and skill; but neither is regarded as necessary for the fit adornment of the soul's imperishable vesture. The young mother seems to think she has done her whole duty to her child when she has christened it George Washington Lafayette, or Evelina Henrietta Augusta; but she consults neither book nor friends to know by what hallowed words of counsel and of impulse she can baptize it into a life of wisdom and of holiness. What wonder then, *what wonder then*, when children grow old, that they should disperse in all ways, rather than walk in the way in which they should go?

If the vehement, but blind love of offspring, which comes by nature, is not enlightened and guided by knowledge, and study, and reflection, it is sure to defeat its own desires. Hence, the frequency and the significance of such expressions as are used by plain, rustic people, of strong common sense: — “There were too many peacocks where that boy was brought up;” or, “The silly girl is not to blame, for she was dolled up, from a doll in the cradle to a doll in the parlor.” All children have foolish desires, freaks, caprices, appetites, which they have no power or skill to gratify; but the foolish parent supplies all the needed skill, time, money, to gratify them; and thus the greater talent and resources of the parent foster the propensities of the child into excess and predominance. The parental love which was designed by Heaven to be the guardian angel of the child, is thus transformed into a cruel minister of evil.

Think, my friends, for one moment, of the marvellous



nature with which we have been endowed, — of its manifold and diverse capacities, and of their attributes of infinite expansion and duration. Then cast a rapid glance over this magnificent temple of the universe into which we have been brought. The same Being created both by His omnipotence; and, by His wisdom, He has adapted the dwelling-place to the dweller. The exhaustless variety of natural objects by which we are surrounded; the relations of the family, of society, and of the race; the adorable perfections of the Divine mind, — these are means for the development, and spheres for the activity, and objects for the aspiration of the immortal soul. For the sustentation of our physical natures, God has created the teeming earth, and tenanted the field and the forest, the ocean and the air, with innumerable forms of life; and He has said to us, “have dominion” over them. For the education of the perceptive intellect, there have been provided the countless multitude and diversity of substances, forms, colors, motions, — from a drop of water, to the ocean; from the tiny crystal that sparkles upon the shore, to the sun that blazes in the heavens, and the sun-strewn firmament. For the education of the reflecting intellect we have the infinite relations of discovered and undiscovered sciences, — the encyclopædias of matter and of spirit, of which all the encyclopædias of man, as yet extant, are but the alphabet. We have domestic sympathies looking backwards, around, and forwards; and answering to these, are the ties of filial, conjugal, and parental relations. Through our inborn sense of melody and harmony, all joyful and plaintive emotions flow out into spontaneous music; and, not friends and kindred only, but even dead nature echoes back our sorrows and our joys. To give a costless delight to our sense of beauty, we have the variegated landscape, the

rainbow, the ever-renewing beauty of the moon, the glories of the rising and the setting sun, and the ineffable purity and splendor of that celestial vision when the northern and the southern auroras shoot up from the horizon, and overspread the vast concave with their many-colored flame, as though it were a reflection caught from the waving banner of angels, when the host of heaven rejoices over some sinner that has repented. And finally, for the amplest development, for the eternal progress of those attributes that are proper to man, — for conscience, for the love of truth, for that highest of all emotions, the love and adoration of our Creator, — God, in his unsearchable riches, has made full provision. And here, on the one hand, is the subject of education, — the child, with its manifold and wonderful powers; — and, on the other hand, this height, and depth, and boundlessness of natural and of spiritual instrumentalities, to build up the nature of that child into a capacity for the intellectual comprehension of the universe, and into a spiritual similitude to its Author. And who are they that lay their rash hands upon this holy work? Where or when have they learned, or sought to learn, to look at the unfolding powers of the child's soul, and to see what it requires, and then to run their eye and hand over this universe of material and of moral agencies, and to select and apply whatever is needed, at the time needed, and in the measure needed? Surely, in no other department of life is knowledge so indispensable; surely, in no other is it so little sought for. In no other navigation is there such danger of wreck; in no other is there such blind pilotage.

But the parent has the child on hand, and he *must* educate and control him. For this purpose, he must apply such means and motives as he is acquainted with, and use them with such skill as he may happen to possess.

In regard to the intellect, the parent has one general notion that the child has faculties by which he can learn, and he has another general notion that there are things to be learned ; but, at the same time, he is utterly ignorant of the distinctive nature of the intellectual faculties ; of the periods of their respective development ; of the particular classes of objects in the external world, and the particular subjects of philosophical speculation, which are related to particular faculties, and adapted to arouse and strengthen them ; and he is also ignorant of all the favoring circumstances under which the faculties and their related objects should be brought into communion. In such a condition of things, are not the chances as infinity to one against the proper training of the child ?

I say, the parent who has never read or reflected on this subject, is necessarily ignorant of the favoring circumstances under which knowledge should be addressed to a child's mind. What but a profound and widely prevalent ignorance on this point, can account for the fact, that a parent should send his child of four years of age to a dreary and repulsive schoolroom, and plant him there upon a seat, which, like the old instruments of torture, seems to have been contrived in the light of anatomical knowledge, and pre-adapted to shoot aches and cramps into every joint and muscle ? What but ignorance on this subject, could ever permit a teacher to enforce stagnation upon both the body and the mind of a little child, for at least two hours and a half of the three hours in each half day's session of a school ? In our old schoolhouses, and under our old system, were not little children denied alike the repose of sleep and the excitements of being awake ? Were not their heads often surrounded by air as hot and dry as that of an African

desert, while Boreas was allowed to seize them by the feet? Were they not condemned to read what they did not comprehend, and to commit to memory arbitrary rules in grammar and in arithmetic, which were not explained? Did the parent visit the school, or manifest interest and sympathy in the studies of the child? And when, at last, alienation and disgust succeeded, when the school was deserted, the books thrown aside, and scenes of rude and riotous pleasure were sought in their stead, did not the parent justify himself, and throw the blame of his own folly upon nature, by saying, Alas! the child never loved learning? But I ask whether such a course of proceeding is a fair trial of the question, whether God has created the human intellect to hate knowledge? In all soberness I ask, whether it would not be every whit as fair an experiment, should an idiot seize a child in one hand and a honey-pot in the other, and after besmearing the soles of his feet and the palms of his hands, and the nape of his neck with the honey, and producing only resistance and disgust, should then deny that children like honey?

Still more disastrous are the mistakes of ignorance, in moral training. All punishment, for instance, holds the most intimate relation to morals; and yet, how reckless and absurd is its infliction, when administered by ignorant or passionate parents! When a child is made to expiate a wrong, by committing to memory two chapters in the Bible, — as many a child has been compelled to do, — does it make him love the right or — hate the Bible? When a rich father threatens to disinherit a wayward son, does the menace tend to make that son obey the fifth commandment, or does it only make him hope that his father will die in a fit, and too suddenly to make a will? I once saw the mother of a large family of chil-

dren, — a woman who would have been ashamed not to be able to discuss the merits of the latest novel, — induce her little son to take a nauseous dose of medicine, by telling him that if he did not swallow it quickly, she would call in his little sister and give it all to her ; and so strong had the selfish desire of getting something from his sister become, that the little imp shut his eyes, scowled terribly, and gulped down the dose ! When a child, to whom no glimpse of the necessity and beauty of truth has ever been revealed, sees a terrific storm of vengeance gathering over him, and just ready to burst upon his head, it is not depravity, it is only the instinct of self-preservation, that prompts him to escape, through falsehood. Bodily fear is one of the lowest of all motives, whether we regard the object or the actor. As it regards the object, it is the brute, and the brutish part of man only, that are amenable to it. As it regards the agent, no one is so ignorant and barbarous as not to know its power. The Hottentot, the Esquimaux, the Fejee-Islander, — all know that the power of inflicting corporal pain produces subjection ; — nay, the more ignorant and barbarian any one may be, the more sure is he to make the power of inflicting pain his only resource. I do not mean to say, that, in the present state of society, this motive can be wholly dispensed with, in the government of children ; or, that evils worse than itself might not arise from its universal proscription. Still, its true place is certainly at, or very near, the bottom of the scale. It may be used to prevent wrong, by the sudden arrest of the offender ; but it never can be used as an incentive to good. Other low classes of motives consist in the gratification of appetite, the acquisition of wealth, the love of display, the desire of outshining others, and so forth. A character of high and enduring excellence can never be formed from any

quantity or any combination of these elements. If distinction is the only thing for which my heart pants, and I happen to belong to a community or a party that reverences truth and virtue, then I shall be led to simulate such motives and to perform such external actions as resemble truth and virtue. Even then, however, the semblance, and not the reality, will be my aim. But if I am transferred to another community or party, which carries its measures by persecution and senseless clamor, or by persistence in falsehood and wrong; then, spurred on by the same love of distinction, I shall persecute, and clamor senselessly, and persist to the end in falsehood and wrong. It is because of a prevalent ignorance how to use the motives of filial affection, of justice, of benevolence, of duty to God, of doing right for the internal delight which doing right bestows; — it is because of this prevalent ignorance, that bodily fear, the pleasures of appetite, emulation and pride, constitute so large a portion of the motive-forces that are now employed in the education of children. And parents are yet to be made to believe, with a depth of conviction they have never experienced; they are to be made to feel as they have never yet felt, that, from the same infant natures committed to their care, they may rear up children who will be an honor to their old age, and a staff for their declining years, or those who will bring down their gray hairs with sorrow to the grave; — and that, in the vast majority of cases, these results depend, more than upon all things else, upon the knowledge or the ignorance, the wisdom or the folly, that superintends their training.

In explaining that part of the work of education which the Creator seems to have committed to the hands of men, I have been led thus far to speak of our duties as individuals, rather than of those social and civil duties

which devolve upon us as neighbors, as citizens, and as constituent parts of the government.

The first glance at our *social* position reveals one of the most striking and significant facts in the arrangements of Providence ; and, as a consequence of this fact, one of the clearest of our social duties. A parent, however vigilant and devoted he may be, prepares only a part of the influences which go to the education of his child. The community, and the State where he resides, prepare the rest. The united force of all makes up the positive education which the child receives. No person can now be situated as Adam and Eve were, when rearing the two elder members of their family. Without knowledge, and guided only by chance, or by their own uninstructed sagacity, they reared first a murderer, and then one who feared God. The first was what we call a spoiled child, — whether ruined by indulgence or by severity, we know not, perhaps by both ; — the second had the advantage of a little parental experience. But since their day, all children are subject to influences external to the parental household. No parent, now, can bring up his child in an exhausted receiver. And hence the necessity that each parent should look, not only to his own conduct, but to the conduct of the community in which he resides. That community must be moral and exemplary, in order that he may be safe. Here, therefore, even an enlightened selfishness coincides with benevolence. In order to our own highest good, we are bound to do good to others ; for we cannot be wholly safe while they are wrong. How glorious the appointment of Providence, which thus reconciles self-love with the love of the race ; which, indeed, makes the former defeat its own ends, when it pursues them in contravention of the latter ! The love of our own children, then, when duly enlightened, prompts us to regard the welfare of those of our neighbor.

Emphatically do some of the most important of all duties devolve upon us, as members of a State which is invested with the authority to legislate for itself. If we were governed by others, on their heads would be the crime of our misgovernment; but when we govern ourselves, and govern wrongly, we unite, in our own persons, both the guilt and the calamities of misgovernment. In the present state of society, an education of a high character cannot be universally diffused, without a union of the forces of society, and a concert in its action. Co-operation and unity of purpose will be found to increase the power of citizens in peace, as much as they do of soldiers in war. And hence the duty of combined action, on the part of the community, in reference to this subject. But combined action can never be effected to any useful purpose amongst a free people, without agreement, without compact, that is, — where the action of great numbers is concerned, — without law. Upon the lawgivers then, there fastens an obligation of inexpressible magnitude and sacredness; and utterly unworthy the honorable station of a lawgiver is he, who would elude this duty, or who unfaithfully discharges it, or who perverts it to any sinister purpose. And why should the legislator forever debase his character to that of a scourger, a prison-keeper, and an executioner? Why, wearing a gorgon's head, and carrying stripes in his hand, should he pass before the community as an avenger of evil only, and not as the promoter and rewarder of good? If terror and retribution are his highest attributes, then his post is no more honorable than that of the beadle who whips, or of the headsmen who decapitates. A legislator, worthy of the name, should seek for honor and veneration, by moving through society as a minister of beneficence, rather than as a spectre of fear. He should reflect that new and better re-



sults in the condition of mankind are to be secured by new and wiser measures. We are not to ask Heaven for the annihilation of the present race, and the creation of a new one ; but we are to ascertain and to use those means, for the renovation, the redemption of mankind, which have been given, or which the veracity of Heaven stands pledged to give, whenever, on our part, we perform the conditions preliminary to receiving them.

You will recollect, my friends, that memorable fire which befell the city of New York, in the year 1835. It took place in the heart of that great emporium, — a spot where merchants, whose wealth was like that of princes, had gathered their treasures. In but few places on the surface of the globe was there accumulated such a mass of riches. From each continent and from all the islands of the sea, ships had brought thither their tributary offerings, until it seemed like a magazine of the nations, — the coffer of the world's wealth. In the midst of these hoards, the fire broke out. It raged between two and three days. Above, the dome of the sky was filled with appalling blackness; below, the flames were of an unapproachable intensity of light and heat; and such were the inclemency of the season and the raging of the elements, that all human power and human art seemed as vanity and nothing. Yet, situated in the very midst of that conflagration, there was one building, upon which the storm of fire beat in vain. All around, from elevated points in the distance, from steeples and the roofs of houses, thousands of the trembling inhabitants gazed upon the awful scene; and thought, — as well they might, — that it was one of universal and undistinguishing havoc. But, as some swift cross-wind furrowed athwart that sea of flame, or a broad blast beat down its aspiring crests, there, safe amidst ruin, erect

amongst the falling, was seen that single edifice. And when, at last, the ravage ceased, and men again walked those streets in sorrow, which so lately they had walked in pride, there stood that solitary edifice, unharmed amid surrounding desolation; — from the foundation to the cope-stone, unscathed; — and over the treasures which had been confided to its keeping, the smell of fire had not passed. There it stood, like an honest man in the streets of Sodom. Now, why was this? It was constructed from the same material, of brick and mortar, of iron and slate, with the thousands around it, whose substance was now but rubbish, and their contents ashes. Now, why was this? *It was built by a workman.* **IT WAS BUILT BY A WORKMAN.** The man who erected that surviving, victorious structure, *knew* the nature of the materials he used; he *knew* the element of fire; he *knew* the power of combustion. Fidelity seconded his knowledge. He did not put in stucco for granite, nor touchwood for iron. He was not satisfied with outside ornaments, with finical cornices and gingerbread work; but deep in all its hidden foundations, — in the interior of its walls and in all its secret joints, — where no human eye should ever see the compact masonry, — he consolidated, and cemented, and closed it in, until it became impregnable to fire, — insoluble in that volcano. And thus, my hearers, must parents become workmen in the education of their children. They must know that, from the very nature and constitution of things, a lofty and enduring character cannot be formed by ignorance and chance. They must know that no skill or power of man can ever lay the imperishable foundations of virtue, by using the low motives of fear, and the pride of superiority, and the love of worldly applause or of worldly wealth, any more than they can rear a material edifice,

storm-proof and fire-proof, from bamboo and cane-brake!

Until, then, this subject of education is far more studied and far better understood than it has ever yet been, there can be no security for the formation of pure and noble minds; and though the child that is born to-day may turn out an Abel, yet we have no assurance that he will not be a Cain. Until parents will learn to train up children in the way they should go,—until they will learn what that way is,—the paths that lead down to the realms of destruction must continue to be thronged;—the doting father shall feel the pangs of a disobedient and profligate son, and the mother shall see the beautiful child whom she folds to her bosom, turn to a coiling serpent and sting the breast upon which it was cherished. Until the thousandth and the ten thousandth generation shall have passed away, the Deity may go on doing his part of the work, but unless we do our part also, the work will never be done,—and until it is done, the river of parental tears must continue to flow. Unlike Rachel, parents shall weep for their children *because they are*, and not because they *are not*;—nor shall they be comforted, until they will learn, that God in His infinite wisdom has pervaded the universe with immutable laws,—laws which may be made productive of the highest forms of goodness and happiness;—and, in His infinite mercy, has provided the means by which those laws can be discovered and obeyed; but that he has left it to us to learn and to apply them, or to suffer the unutterable consequences of ignorance. But when we shall learn and shall obey those laws,—when the immortal nature of the child shall be brought within the action of those influences,—each at its appointed time,—which have been graciously prepared for training it up in the way it should

go, then may we be sure that God will clothe its spirit in garments of *amianthus*, that it may not be corrupted, and of *asbestos*, that it may not be consumed, and that it will be able to walk through the pools of earthly pollution, and through the furnace of earthly temptation, and come forth white as linen that has been washed by the fuller, and pure as the golden wedge of Ophir that has been refined in the refiner's fire.



**LECTURE V.**

**1840.**



## LECTURE V.

### AN HISTORICAL VIEW OF EDUCATION; SHOWING ITS DIGNITY AND ITS DEGRADATION.

GENTLEMEN OF THE CONVENTION:—

IN treating any important and comprehensive subject, it will inevitably happen that some portions of it will be found less interesting than others;—inferior in beauty, dignity, elevation. In every book we read, some chapters will be less animating and instructive than the rest; in every landscape we survey, some features less impressive and grand; in every journey we take, some stages more dreary and laborious. Yet we must accept them together, as a whole,—the poor with the good. This is my apology for presenting to you, at the present time, a class of views, which,—whether they excite more or less interest,—will derive none of it from flattering our self-complacency.

In attempting a series of lectures on the great subject of Education, I have arrived at a topic which must be discussed, however far it may fall below the average in interest and attractiveness. In previous lectures, I have spoken of the general state and condition of education amongst us, and have pointed out some of the more urgent and immediate wants which it enjoins us to supply. I have endeavored to unfold some of the more vital principles of this great science; I have spoken of its objects; of its importance in all countries and in all times; and, more especially, of its absolute and unconditional necessity under social and political institutions



like ours. Under this last head, I have endeavored to demonstrate that, in a land of liberty, — that is, in a land where the people, in their collective capacity, are free to do wrong as well as free to do right; where there is no sanguinary or surgical code of laws to cut off the offending members of society; no thousand-eyed police to detect transgression and crush it in the germ; — in fine, where are few external restraints which can be brought to bear upon the appetites and passions of men, — that, in such a land, there must be internal restraints; that reason, conscience, benevolence, and a reverence for all that is sacred, must supply the place of force and fear; and, for this purpose, the very instincts of self-preservation admonish us to perfect our system of education, and to carry it on far more generally and more vigorously than we have ever yet done. For this purpose we must study the principles of education more profoundly; we must make ourselves acquainted with the art, or processes, by which those principles can be applied in practice; and, by establishing proper agencies and institutions, we must cause a knowledge both of the science and the art to be diffused throughout the entire mass of the people.

In this stage of the inquiry, it seems proper to consider in what relative esteem or disesteem the subject of education has heretofore been held, and is now held, in the regards of men. Let us seek an answer to such questions as these: — Have men assigned to the cause of education a high or a low position? What things have they placed above it; and what things, (if any,) have they placed below it? How have its followers been honored or rewarded? What means, instrumentalities, accommodations, have been provided for carrying on the work? In fine, when its interests have come in competition with other interests, which have been made to yield? It is re-

lated of a certain king, that, when embarked on a voyage, attended by some of his courtiers, and carrying with him some of his treasures, a storm arose, which made it necessary to lighten the ship; — whereupon, he commanded his courtiers to be thrown overboard, but saved his money. How is it with parents, who are embarked with fortune and family on this voyage of life; — when they need a better schoolhouse to save their children from ill health, or a better teacher to rescue them from immorality and ignorance; or even a slate or a shilling's worth of paper to save them from idleness; — have we any parents amongst us, or have we not, who, under such circumstances, will fling the child overboard, and save the shilling?

A ten-pound weight will not more certainly weigh down a five-pound weight, than a man will act in obedience to that which, on the whole, is his strongest motive. When, therefore, we would ascertain the rank which education actually holds in the regards of any community, we must not merely listen to what that community says; we must see what it does. This is especially true, in our country, where this cause has so many flatterers, but so few friends. Not by their *words*, but by their *works*, shall ye know them, is a test of universal application. Nor must we stop with inspecting the form of the system which may have been anywhere established; we must see whether it be a live system, or an automaton.

A practical unbelief as to the power of education, — the power of physical, intellectual and moral training, — exists amongst us. As a people, we do not believe that these fleshly tabernacles, — which we call tabernacles of clay, — may, by a proper course of training, become as it were tabernacles of iron; or, by an improper course of

training, may become tabernacles of glass. We do not believe, that if we would understand and obey the Physical Laws of our nature, our bodies might be so compacted and toughened, that they would outlast ten cast-iron bodies; or, on the other hand, that by ignorant and vicious management, they may become so sleazy and puny, that a body of glass, made by a glass-blower, would outlast ten of them. We have no practical belief that the human intellect, under a course of judicious culture, can be made to grow brighter and brighter, like the rising sun, until it shall shed its light over the dark problems of humanity, and put ignorance and superstition to flight; — we do not believe this, as we believe that corn will grow, or that a stone will fall; and yet the latter facts are no more in accordance with the benign laws of nature than the former. We manifest no living, impulsive faith in the scriptural declaration, “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he *will not* depart from it.” The Scripture does not say that he *probably* will not depart from it; or that in nine cases out of ten he will not depart from it; but it asserts, positively and unconditionally, that he **WILL NOT** depart from it; — the declaration being philosophically founded upon the fact, that God has made provision for the moral welfare of all his creatures, and that, when we do not attain to it, the failure is caused by our own ignorance or neglect. It is not more true that a well-built ship will float in sea-water instead of diving to the bottom, than it is that spiritually-cultivated affections will buoy up their possessor above the low indulgences of sensuality, and avarice, and profaneness, and intemperance, and irreverence towards things sacred.

But I repeat, that, as a people, we have no living faith in these sublime and indestructible truths; — no faith

that makes the mind think and the hand work ; no faith that induces exertions and sacrifices, as men exert themselves to acquire fortunes or to obtain honors. Did we comprehend, in all their vastness and splendor, the rewards of earthly honor and glory, and of a blissful immortality, which an appropriate training of all parts of their nature is fitted to procure for our children, then we should hunger and thirst after the requisite knowledge ; we should make all efforts and sacrifices to secure the outward means, by which so great a prize could be won ; and we should subordinate all other desires to this grand desire. It would rise with us in the morning, attend us through the day, retire with us to the nightly couch, and mingle its aspirations, not only with our prayers but with our dreams.

And, furthermore, as a people, we justify our scepticism in regard to the power of education ; we virtually charge it with impotency ; we say that, of two children, brought up in the same family, in precisely the same manner, and under the same influences, one shall be almost a saint, and the other quite a sinner ; when the truth is, that the natural temperament and dispositions of children belonging to the same family, are often so different from each other, that their being brought up in precisely the same manner, under the same influences, and, of course, without any of the necessary discriminations, is enough to account for the result that, while one of them may be almost a saint, the other should be the chief of sinners.

We also appeal to the history of the past, and aver that among the most enlightened nations of the earth, education has done little or nothing towards producing a state of individual and social well-being, at once universal and permanent ;—and now, in this infancy of the world, we

rashly prescribe limits to what may be done, from what has been done,— which is about as wise as it would be to say of an infant, that because it never has walked or talked, it never will walk or talk.

My purpose and hope, on the present occasion, are, to vindicate the cause of education from this charge of imbecility ; and to show that it has prospered less than other causes have prospered, for the sole and simple, but sufficient reason, that it has been cherished less than other causes have been cherished,— not only in former times and in other countries, but in our own time and country, that is, *always* and *everywhere*.

I affirm generally, that, up to the present age and hour, the main current of social desires and energies,— the literature, the laws, the wealth, the talent, the character-forming institutions of the world,— have flowed in other channels, and left this one void of fertilizing power. Philosophers, moralists, sages, who have illumined the world with the splendor of their genius on other subjects, have rarely shed the feeblest beam of light upon this. Of all the literature of the ancients which has come down to us, only a most meagre and inconsiderable part has any reference to education. Examine Homer and Virgil, among the poets ; Herodotus, Josephus or Livy, among the historians ; or Plutarch among biographers ; and you would never infer that, according to their philosophy, the common mass of children did not grow up noble or hateful by a force of their own, like a cedar of Lebanon, or a wild thorn-tree.

The most important and most general fact which meets us, on approaching the subject, is, that, until within less than two centuries of the present time, no system of *free* schools for a whole people was maintained anywhere upon earth ; and then, only in one of the colonies of this

country, — that colony being the feeble and inconsiderable one of Massachusetts, containing at that time only a few thousand inhabitants.

Among several of the most powerful nations of antiquity, where laws on the subject of education existed, there were no *Public* Schools. Rome, which so long swayed the destinies of the world, and at last sunk to so ignominious a close, had no *Public* Schools. Its schools were what we call *Private*, — undertaken on speculation, and by any person, however unsuitable or irresponsible.

Among the Jews, there seems to be no evidence that there were schools even for boys. It is supposed that even arithmetic was not taught to them, and so universally was the education of females neglected, that even the daughters of the priests could not read and write. Girls, however, were instructed in music and dancing.

The part of education most attended to by all the ancient nations, was that which tended to strengthen and harden the body. Even this, however, was hardly worthy of being called *physical* education, because it was conducted without any competent notions of anatomy or physiology. As war was the grand object which nations proposed to themselves, the education of male children was conducted in reference to their becoming soldiers. In modern times we have gone to the other extreme, — educating the mind, or rather parts of the mind, to the almost total neglect of the body. A striking illustration of these facts is, that the places appropriated to bodily exercises among the Greeks, were called *Gymnasia*; while the Germans, who excel in the cultivation of classical literature, call those schools where mind is cultivated, to the almost entire neglect of the body, by the same name. There can be no true education without the union of both.

Education was established, far below that of skilful artisans and mechanics, or even of the better class of operatives in manufacturing establishments. The common laborers on our farms, the journeymen in our shops, and the workpeople in our mills, — all have some fixed residence, some place enjoying the seclusion and invested with the sacred associations of home. Even the old-fashioned cobbler, who used to travel from house to house, carrying on his back his box of tools and his scraps of leather, has at last found an abiding-place; — *nobody but the schoolmaster is obliged to board round*. Nobody but the schoolmaster is put up at auction, and knocked off to the *lowest bidder*! I think this use of the word "*lowest*" must oftentimes vivify a teacher's grammatical notions of the superlative degree. Think you, my friends, there would be so many young men pressing forward into the profession of the law, if lawyers were put up at auction, and then had to *board round* among their clients?

Compare the salaries given to engineers, to superintendents of railroads, to agents and overseers of manufacturing establishments, to cashiers of banks, and so forth, with the customary rates of remuneration given to teachers. Yet, does it deserve a more liberal requital, does it require greater natural talents, or greater attainments, to run cotton or woollen machinery, or to keep a locomotive from running off the track, than it does to preserve this wonderfully-constructed and complicated machine of the human body in health and vigor; or to prevent the spiritual nature, — that vehicle which carries all our hopes, — from whirling deviously to its ruin, or from dashing madly forward to some fatal collision? Custom-house collectors and postmasters sometimes realize four, five or six thousand dollars a year from their offices, while

as many hundreds are grudgingly paid to a school teacher.

The compensation which we give with the hand is a true representation of the value which we affix in the mind; and how much more liberally and cordially do we requite those who prepare outward and perishable garments for the persons of our children, than those whose office it is to endue their spirits with the immortal vestments of virtue? Universally, the price-current of accomplishments ranges far above that of solid and enduring attainments. Is not the dancing-master, who teaches our children to take the steps, better requited than he who teaches their feet not to go down to the chambers of death? Were the music-master as wretchedly rewarded and as severely criticised as the schoolmaster, would not his strains involuntarily run into the doleful and lugubrious? Strolling minstrels, catching the eye with grotesque dresses, and chanting unintelligible words, are feasted, *fêted* and garlanded; and when a European dancer, nurtured at the foul breast of theatrical corruption, visits our land, the days of idolatry seem to have returned;—wealth flows, the incense of praise rises, enthusiasm rages like the mad Bacchantes. It is said that Celeste received *fifty thousand dollars*, in this country, in one year, for the combined exhibition of skill and person; and that devotee to Venus, Fanny Ellsler, was paid the enormous sum of *sixty thousand dollars*, in three months, for the same meritorious consideration, or *value received*. In both these cases, a fair proportion was contributed in the metropolis of our own State. At the rate of compensation at which a majority of the female teachers in Massachusetts have been rewarded for their exhausting toils, it would require more than twenty years' continued labor to equal the receipts of Fanny Ellsler for a single night!



Thus, in our most populous places, and amongst people who profess to lead society, stands the relative supremacy of sense and soul, of heels and head. And I blush while I reflect, that amongst all the daughters of New England who witnessed the unreserved displays of these Cyprian women, there was not one to be found, in whose veins flowed the chaste blood of the Puritan mothers, prompting her to approach these female *sans culottes*, backwards, and perform for them the same friendly service, which, on a like necessity, the sons of Noah performed for him. And although I would not silence one note in the burst of admiration with which our young men, who assume to be the leaders of fashion, respond to the charms of female beauty, agility, or grace; yet I do desire that, in paying their homage, they should distinguish between the Venus Celestial and the Venus Infernal! \*

\* In discussing the propriety or impropriety of exhibiting live specimens of female nudity, before mixed assemblies of ladies and gentlemen, — especially when the spectacles are of the *ad libitum* sort, and where the actress is expected to acknowledge every round of applause by enlarging the field of vision, — I have sometimes been answered in the language of King Edward's celebrated saying, "*Honi soit qui mal y pense*," "Evil to him who thinks evil." One thing has tended to disgust me with this retort. I have never known it used, for this purpose, except by persons more or less deeply tainted with libertinism during some part of their lives. I never knew it given by a man wholly free from reproach, in conduct and reputation, on the score of licentiousness.

One of the most striking things in the "Letters from Abroad," by Miss C. M. Sedgwick, is the uniform and energetic condemnation which that true American lady bestows upon opera-dancers, and the whole *corps de ballet*, for the public and shameless exhibition of their persons upon the stage. Have the young ladies of our cities a nicer sense of propriety, of modesty, and of all the elements of female loveliness, than this excellent author, who has written so much for their improvement, and who is herself so admirable an example of all feminine purity and delicacy? And have the young men of America a higher *ideal* of what belongs to a true gentleman, — to a man of lofty and noble nature, than a writer, who is so justly

As I have before intimated, the relics, the symbols, the monuments, of whatever kind they may be, which a people has prepared to sustain or enshrine the objects of its interest or affections, furnish undesigned, and therefore demonstrative evidence of the relative estimation in which these objects were held. The dull and heavy Egyptians have left us the visible impress and emblem of their minds, in their indistinct hieroglyphics, their ponderous architecture, and in their pyramids, which exhibit magnificence without taste, costliness without elegance, and power without genius. But the splendid temples, statues and arches of the Greeks, the massive aqueducts and horizon-seeking roads of the Romans, were only the outward and visible representations of their conceptions of ideal beauty, of grandeur and power. Amongst a people strongly drawn towards commerce, as the source of their supremacy and opulence, like the ancient Phœnicians, or like the people of Great Britain or of the United States at the present day, the art of ship-building is sure to be cultivated, and the finest specimens of naval architecture to be produced. So, if great reliance is placed upon an extensive inland traffic, then innavigable rivers will be made navigable, mountains of solid rock will be channelled, valleys filled, and what we have before called the everlasting hills will be removed

celebrated, in both hemispheres, for her pure and elevated conceptions of human character?

It is not with any harshness of feeling that I make another remark, but only in view of the natural consequences or tendencies of conduct; but it seems to me that, for a husband to accompany his wife, or a father his daughter, to such an exhibition, ought to be held a good plea in bar in all our courts of law, should the same husband or father afterwards appear as a prosecutor claiming damages, as the legal phraseology runs, "*for loss of service and pain of mind*," on account of the wife or daughter whom he had accompanied to such an exhibition.

to create facilities for internal transportation. In fine, our *works* are the visible embodiment and representation of our *feelings*. Thus, the Psalmist, referring to the unspeakably magnificent heavens, says: — they “declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handiwork.”

Tried by this unerring standard in human nature, our *Schoolhouses* are a fair index or exponent of our interest in Public Education. Suppose, at this moment, some potent enchanter, by the waving of his magic wand, should take up all the twenty-eight hundred schoolhouses of Massachusetts, with all the little triangular and *non-descript* spots of earth whereon and wherein they have been squeezed, — whether sand-bank, morass, bleak knoll, or torrid plain, — and, whirling them through the affrighted air, should set them all down, visibly, round about us, in this place; and then should take us up into some watch-tower or observatory, where, at one view, we could behold the whole as they were encamped round about, — each one true to the point of compass which marked its nativity, each one retaining its own color or no-color, each one standing on its own heath, hillock, or fen; — I ask, my friends, if, in this new spectacle under the sun, with its motley hues of red, gray, and doubtful, with its windows sprinkled with patterns taken from Joseph’s many-colored coat, with its broken chimneys, with its shingles and clapboards flapping and clattering in the wind, as if giving public notice that they were about to depart, — I ask, if, in this indescribable and unnamable group of architecture, we should not see the true image, reflection and embodiment of our own love, attachment, and regard for, Public Schools and Public Education, as, in a mirror, face answereth to face? But, however neglected, forgotten, forlorn, these edifices may be, yet within their walls is con-

tained the young and blooming creation of God. In them are our hope, the hopes of the earth. There are gathered together what posterity shall look back upon, as we now look back upon heroes and sages and martyrs and apostles ; or as we look back upon bandits and inquisitors and sybarites. Our dearest treasures do not consist in lands and tenements, in railroads and banks, in warehouses or in ships upon every sea ; they are within those doors, beneath those humble roofs ; and is it not our solemn duty to hold every other earthly interest subordinate to their welfare ?

My friends, these points of contrast between our devotion to objects of inferior interest, and our comparative neglect of this transcendent cause, are as painful to me as they can be to any one. Among all that remain, I will mention but one class more. I ask you to look at the pecuniary appropriations, which, within a few years past, the State has made for the encouragement of outward and material interests, compared with what it has done, or rather refused to do, for the enlightenment and moral renovation of society, through a universal education of the people. Within the last three years, the treasury of the Commonwealth has dispensed a bounty of about twenty-five thousand dollars to encourage the growth of wheat, — and within the last two years, of about five thousand dollars for the culture of silk, — for those goods which perish with the using ; while it has not contributed one cent towards satisfying the pressing demand for apparatus and libraries for our schools, by which the imperishable treasures of knowledge and virtue would be increased a hundred-fold. The State has provided for the gratuitous distribution of a manual, descriptive of the art and processes of silk-culture, but made no provision for the distribution of any manual on that most

difficult of all arts, — the art of Education, — as though silk-culture were more important and more difficult than soul-culture.

During the very last year, the State paid a Militia Bounty of thirty thousand dollars, to soldiers, for three or four trainings. Where are those trainings now? Where now the net proceeds, the value received, the available, visible result, as exhibited in the advancement of society, or the promotion of human welfare? Could thirty thousand dollars have been distributed to sustain the sinking hearts of those females who keep school for a dollar a week, or for ninepence a day, should we not now be able to show some of its tangible fruits, and would not a transfer of the fund to such an object have illustrated quite as well the gallantry of the citizen soldier?

To the American Institute of Instruction, whose noble object it is to improve the *race of children*, the State, after much importunity, has given the sum of three hundred dollars a year for five years, (fifteen hundred dollars,) while to Agricultural Societies, formed for the purpose of improving the *breed of cattle* and a few other kindred objects, it has given from four thousand dollars to six thousand dollars a year, for about twenty years!

In the year 1834, the Legislature made provision for the prospective creation of a School Fund, to be formed from half the proceeds of wild lands in the State of Maine, and from the Massachusetts claim on the general government for militia services rendered during the last war. Through unexpected good fortune, about four hundred thousand dollars have been realized from these sources. Compare this bestowment, however, of a contingent sum, — a part of which was not regarded, at the time, as much better than a gift of half the proceeds of a lottery ticket, provided it should draw a prize, — with its

prompt and magnificent encouragement of railroads. No sooner were the eyes of the State opened to the commercial importance of an internal communication with the West, than it forthwith bound itself to the amount of five millions of dollars in aid of this merely corporeal and worldly enterprise.

One word more, and I will forbear any further to depict these painful contrasts ;—I will forbear, not from lack of materials, but from faintness of spirit. Almost from year to year, through the whole period of our history, wealthy and benevolent individuals have risen up amongst us, who have made noble gifts for literary, charitable and religious purposes, — for public libraries, for founding professorships in colleges, for establishing scientific and theological institutions, for sending abroad missionaries to convert the heathen, — some to one form of faith, some to another. For most of these objects, the State has co-operated with individuals ; often, it has given on its own account. It has bestowed immense sums upon the University at Cambridge, and Williams College, especially the former. It gave thirty thousand dollars to the Massachusetts General Hospital. It put ten thousand dollars into the Bunker-hill Monument, there to stand forever in mindless, insentient, inanimate granite. But while, with such a bounteous heart and open hand, the State had bestowed its treasures for special, or local objects, — for objects circumscribed to a party or a class, — it had not, for two hundred years, in its parental and sovereign capacity, given any thing for universal education ; — it had given nothing, as God gives the rain and the sunshine, to all who enter upon the great theatre of life.

It was under these circumstances, that a private gentleman, to his enduring honor, offered the sum of ten thou-

and dollars, on condition that the State would add an equal amount, to aid Teachers of our Common Schools in obtaining those qualifications which would enable them the more successfully to cultivate the divinely wrought and infinitely valuable capacities of the human soul. The hope and expectation were, that these teachers would go abroad over the State, and, by the improved *modes* and *motives* which they would introduce into the schools, would be the means of conferring new, manifold and unspeakable blessings upon the rising generation, without any distinction of party or of denomination, of mental, or of physical complexion. This hope and expectation were founded upon the reasonableness of the thing, upon the universal experience of mankind in regard to all other subjects, and upon the well-attested experience of several nations in regard to this particular measure. The proposition was acceded to. This sum of twenty thousand dollars was placed at the disposal of the Board of Education, to carry the purposes of the donor and of the Legislature into effect. Institutions called Normal Schools were established. That their influence might be wholly concentrated upon the preparation of teachers for our Common Schools, the almost doubtful provision, that the learned languages should not be included in the list of studies taught therein, was inserted in the regulations for their government;—not because there was any hostility or indifference towards those languages, but because it was desirable to prepare teachers for our Common Schools, rather than to furnish facilities for those who are striving to become teachers of Select Schools, High Schools, and Academies.

The call was responded to by the very class of persons to whom it was addressed. Not the children of the rich, not the idle and luxurious, not those in pursuit of gaudy

accomplishments, came; but the children of the poor, — the daughter of the lone widow whose straitened circumstances forbade her to send to costly and renowned seminaries, — the young man came from his obscure cottage-home, where for years his soul had been on fire with the love of knowledge and the suppressed hope of usefulness; — some accounted the common necessities of life as superfluities, and sold them, that they might participate in these means of instruction; — some borrowed money and subsidized futurity for the same purpose, while others submitted to the lot, still harder to a noble soul, of accepting charity from a stranger's hand. They came, they entered upon their work with fervid zeal, with glowing delight, with that buoyancy and inspiration of hope which none but the young and the poor can ever feel.

But alas! while this noble enterprise was still in its bud and blossom, and before it was possible that any fruits should be matured from it, it was assailed. In the Legislature of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, an attempt was made to abolish the Normal Schools, to disperse the young aspirants who had resorted to them for instruction, and crush their hopes; and to throw back into the hands of the donor the money which he had given, and which the State had pledged its faith to appropriate, — the first and only gift which had ever been made for elevating and extending the education of all the children in the Commonwealth.

In the document which purports to set forth the reasons for this measure, the doctrine, that "the art of teaching is a peculiar art," is gainsaid. It is boldly maintained "that every person who has himself undergone a process of instruction, must acquire by that very process the art of instructing others." And in this country, where, without a higher standard of qualification for teachers,



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without more universal and more efficient means of education than have ever elsewhere existed, all our laws and constitutions are weaker barriers against the assaults of human passion than is a bulrush against the ocean's tide; — in this country, that document affirmed that “perhaps it is not desirable that the business of keeping these schools, [the Common Schools,] should become a distinct and separate profession.”

Conceding to the originators and advocates of this scheme for abolishing the Normal Schools, that they were sincerely friendly to the cause of Common Schools, how strikingly does it exhibit the low state of public sentiment in regard to these schools! Those claiming to be their friends, — men, too, who had been honored by their fellow-citizens with a seat in the Legislature, — thought it unnecessary, even in this country, to elevate the teacher's office into a profession!

I will never cease to protest that I am not bringing forward these facts for the purpose of criminating the motives, or of invoking retribution upon the conduct of any one. My sole and exclusive object is to show to what menial rank the majesty of this cause has been degraded; — to show that the affections of this community are not clustered around it; that it is not the treasure which their hearts love and their hands guard; — in fine, that the sublime idea of a generous and universal education, as the appointed means, in the hands of Providence, for restoring mankind to a greater similitude to their Divine Original, is but just dawning upon the public mind.

But I have done. Let this rapid survey of our condition, by showing us how little has been done, convince us how much remains to be accomplished. Instead of repining at the inadequate conceptions of our predecessors, let us rejoice and shout aloud for joy, that we

have been brought to a point, where the vista of a more glorious future opens upon our view. Let us dilate our spirits to a capacity for embracing the magnitude and grandeur of the work we have undertaken. Let us strengthen our resolutions, till difficulty and obstruction shall be annihilated before them. If the ascent before us is high, all the more glorious will be the prospect from the summit; if it is toilsome, our sinews shall grow mightier by every struggle to overcome it. If it is grateful to recognize blessings which have been won for us by our ancestors, it is more noble in us to win blessings for posterity, — for God has so constituted the soul, that the generous feelings of self-sacrifice are infinitely sweeter and more enduring than the selfish pleasures of indulgence. Although, as friends of this cause, we are few and scattered, and surrounded by an unsympathizing world, yet let us toil on, each in his own sphere, whatever that sphere may be, nor “bate one jot of heart or hope.” Although we now labor, like the coral insects at the bottom of the ocean, uncheered, unheard, unseen, with the tumultuous waters of interest and of passion raging high above us, yet let us continue to labor on, — for, at length, like them, we will bring a rock-built continent to the surface, and upon that surface God will plant his Paradise anew, and people it with men and women of nobler forms and of diviner beauty than any who now live, — with beings whose minds shall be illumined by the light of knowledge, and whose hearts shall be hallowed by the sanctity of religion.

For the fulfilment, then, of these holy purposes, what labor shall we undertake, and in what resolutions shall we persevere unto the end? — for labor and perseverance are indispensable means for the production of any good by human hands.

In the first place, the education of the whole people, in a republican government, can never be attained without the consent of the whole people. Compulsion, even though it were a desirable, is not an available instrument. Enlightenment, not coercion, is our resource. The nature of education must be explained. The whole mass of mind must be instructed in regard to its comprehensive and enduring interests. We cannot drive our people up a dark avenue, even though it be the right one; but we must hang the starry lights of knowledge about it, and show them not only the directness of its course to the goal of prosperity and honor, but the beauty of the way that leads to it. In some districts, there will be but a single man or woman, in some towns scarcely half a dozen men or women, who have espoused this noble enterprise. But whether there be half a dozen or but one, they must be like the little leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal. Let the intelligent visit the ignorant, day by day, as the oculist visits the blind man, and detaches the scales from his eyes, until the living sense leaps to the living light. Let the zealous seek contact and communion with those who are frozen up in indifference, and thaw off the icebergs wherein they lie embedded. Let the love of beautiful childhood, the love of country, the dictates of reason, the admonitions of conscience, the sense of religious responsibility, be plied, in mingled tenderness and earnestness, until the obdurate and dark mass of avarice and ignorance and prejudice shall be dissipated by their blended light and heat.

But a duty more noble, as well as more difficult and delicate than that of restoring the suspended animation of society, will devolve upon the physician and friend of this cause. In its largest sense, no subject is so comprehensive as that of education. Its circumference reaches

around and outside of, and therefore embraces all other interests, human and divine. Hence, there is danger that whenever any thing practical, — any real change, — is proposed, all classes of men will start up and inquire, how the proposed change will affect some private interest, or some idolized theory or opinion of theirs. Suppose a short-sighted, selfish man to be interested as manufacturer, author, compiler, copyright owner, vender, peddler, or puffer, of any of the hundreds of school-books, — from the reading-book that costs a dollar, to the primer that costs fourpence, — whose number and inconsistencies infest our schools, and whose expense burdens our community, — then he will inquire which one of all these books will be likely to meet with countenance or disfavor, in an adjudication upon their merits; and he will strive to turn the scales which confessedly hold the great interests of humanity, one way or the other, as their inclination will promote or oppose the success of his reading-book or his primer. So one, who has entered the political arena, not as a patriot, but as a partisan, will decide upon any new measure by its supposed bearing upon the success of his faction or cabal, and not by its tendency to advance the welfare of the body politic. In relation, too, to a more solemn subject, — how many individuals there are belonging to the hundred conflicting forms of religious faith, which now stain and mottle the holy whiteness of Christianity, who will array themselves against all plans for the reform or renovation of society, unless its agents and instruments are of their selection! And so of all the varied interests in the community, — industrial, literary, political, spiritual. Whatever class this great cause may touch, or be supposed likely to touch, there will come forth from that class, active opponents; or, what may not be less disastrous, selfish and indiscreet friends. I have known

the carpenter and the mason belonging to the same school district, change sides and votes on the expediency of erecting a new schoolhouse, after it had been determined, contrary to expectation, to construct it of brick instead of wood. I have known a bookmaker seek anxiously to learn the opinions of the Board of Education respecting his book, in order to qualify himself to decide upon the expediency of its having been established.

How, then, I ask, is this great interest to sustain itself, amid these disturbing forces of party and sect and faction and clan? how is it to navigate with whirlwinds above and whirlpools below, and rocks on every side?

In the first place, in regard to mere secular and business interests, we are to do no man wrong; we are to show by our deeds, rather than by our words, that we are seeking no private, personal aims, but public ends by equitable means. We are to show that our object is to diffuse light and knowledge, and to leave those who can best bear these tests to profit most by their diffusion. Let us here teach the lessons of justice and impartiality on what, in schools, is called the *exhibitory* method; that is, by an actual exhibition of the principle we would inculcate; and as, for the untaught schoolboy, we bring out specimens, and models and objects, and give practical illustrations by apparatus and diagram to make him acquainted with the various branches of study; so, in the great school of the world, let us illustrate the virtues of generosity, magnanimity, equity and self-sacrifice, by the shining example of our acts and lives.

And again; in regard to those higher interests which the politician and theologian feel called upon to guard and superintend, let us show them that, in supporting a system of Public Instruction, adapted to common wants and to be upheld by common means, we will not en-

croach one hair's breadth upon the peculiar province of any party or any denomination. But let us never cease to reiterate, and urge home upon the consideration of all political parties and religious denominations, that, in order to gain any useful ally to their cause, or worthy convert to their faith, *they must first find a MAN*, — not a statue, not an automaton, not a puppet, but a free, a thinking, an intelligent soul; — a being possessed of the attributes as well as the form of humanity. For what can the enlightened advocate of any doctrine do, if he is compelled to address brutish souls through adders' ears? How much can the senator or the ambassador of Christ accomplish, in convincing or in reforming mankind, if they are first obliged to fish up their subjects from the fetid slough of sensualism, or to excavate them from beneath thick layers of prejudice, where, if I may express myself in geological language, they lie buried below the granite formation? In expounding the great problems of civil polity, or the momentous questions pertaining to our immortal destinies, how much can they effect, while obliged to labor upon men whose intellects are so halting and snail-paced, that they can no more traverse the logical distance between premises and conclusion, in any argument, than their bodies could leap the spaces between the fixed stars? As educators, as friends and sustainers of the Common-school system, our great duty is to prepare these living and intelligent souls; to awaken the faculty of thought in all the children of the Commonwealth; to give them an inquiring, outlooking, forth-going mind; to impart to them the greatest practicable amount of useful knowledge; to cultivate in them a sacred regard to truth; to keep them unspotted from the world, that is, uncontaminated by its vices; to train them up to the love of God and the love of man; to make the



perfect example of Jesus Christ lovely in their eyes ; and to give to all so much religious instruction as is compatible with the rights of others and with the genius of our government, — leaving to parents and guardians the direction, during their school-going days, of all special and peculiar instruction respecting politics and theology ; and at last, when the children arrive at years of maturity, to commend them to that inviolable prerogative of private judgment and of self-direction, which, in a Protestant and a Republican country, is the acknowledged birth-right of every human being.

But sterner trials than any I have yet mentioned await the disciples of this sacred apostleship. The strong abuses that have invaded us will not be complimented into retirement ; they will not be *bowed out* of society ; but as soon as they are touched, they will bristle all over with armor, and assail us with implacable hostility. While doing good, therefore, we must consent to suffer wrong. Such is human nature, that the introduction of every good cause adds another chapter to the Book of Martyrs. Though wise as serpents, yet there are adders who will not hear us ; and though harmless as doves, yet for that very harmlessness will the vultures more readily stoop upon us. We shall not, indeed, be literally carried to the stake, or burned with material fires ; but pangs keener than these, and more enduring, will be made to pierce our breasts. Our motives will be maligned, our words belied, our actions falsified. A reputation, for whose spotlessness and purity we may, through life, have resisted every temptation and made every sacrifice, will be blackened ; and a character, — perhaps our only precious possession wherewith to requite the love of family and friends, — will be traduced, calumniated, vilified ; and, if deemed sufficiently conspicuous to attract

public attention, held up, in the public press, perhaps in legislative halls, to common scorn and derision. What then? Shall we desert this glorious cause? Shall we ignobly sacrifice immortal good to mortal ease? No; never! But let us meet opposition in the spirit of him who prophetically said, "If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you." For those who oppose; and malign us, our revenge shall be, to make their children wiser, better, and happier than themselves. If we ever feel the earthly motives contending with the heavenly in our bosoms, — selfishness against duty, sloth against enduring and ennobling toil, a vicious contentment against aspiring after higher and attainable good, — let us not suffer the earth-born to vanquish the immortal. What though it cannot be said,

"A cloud of witnesses around  
Hold us in full survey,"

yet the voiceless approval of conscience outweighs the applauses of the world, and will outlast the very air and light through which the eulogiums of mankind, or the memorials of their homage, can be manifested to us.

What, too, though we cannot complete or perfect the work in our own age. For the consummation of such a cause, a thousand years are to be regarded only as a day. We know that the Creator has established an indissoluble connection between our conduct and its consequences. We know that the sublime order of his Providence is sustained, by evolving effects from causes. We know that, within certain limits, he has intrusted the preparation of causes to our hands; and, therefore, we know, that just so far as he has committed this preparation or adjustment of causes to us, he has given us power over effects; — he has given us power to modify or turn

the flow of events for coming ages. As the apostles and martyrs and heroes, who lived centuries ago, have modified the events which happen to us, so have we the power to modify the events which shall happen to our posterity. We are not laboring, then, for threescore and ten years only, but, for aught we know, for threescore and ten centuries, or myriads of centuries. Through these immutable relations of cause and effect, — of evolution, transmission and reproduction, — our conduct will project its consequences through all the eras of coming time. Though our life, therefore, is but as a vapor which passeth away, yet we have power to strike the deepest chords of human welfare, and to give them vibrations which shall sound onward forever. Corresponding with this stupendous order of events, we are endowed with a faculty of mind, by which we can recognize and appreciate our power over the fortunes and destinies of distant times. By the aid of this faculty, we can see that whatever we undertake and prosecute, with right motives and on sound principles, will not return to us void, but will produce its legitimate fruits of beneficence. On this faculty, then, as on eagles' wings, let us soar beyond the visible horizon of time; let us survey the prospect of redoubling magnificence, which, from age to age, will open and stretch onward, before those whose blessed ministry it is to improve the condition of the young; let our thoughts wander up and down among the coming centuries, and partake, by anticipation, of the enjoyments which others shall realize. If we ever seem to be laboring in vain, — if our spirits are ever ready to faint, amid present obstruction and hostility, — then, through this faculty of discerning what mighty results Nature and Providence will mature from humble efforts, let us look forward in faith, and we shall behold this mighty cause emerging from its

present gloom and obscurity, expanding and blossoming out into beauty, and ripening into the immortal fruits of wisdom and holiness ; and as we gaze upon the glorious scene, every faculty within us shall be vivified, and endowed with new and unwonted energy.

What, then, though our words and deeds seem now to be almost powerless and hopeless ; what though bands of noble followers should rise up in our places, to be succeeded again and again by others, whose labors and sacrifices shall seem to fall and perish like the autumnal leaves of the forest ;—yet, like the annual shedding of that foliage, which, for uncounted centuries, has been gradually deepening the alluvium, throughout the vast solitudes of the Mississippi valley, increasing its depth and its richness, so shall the product of our labors accumulate in value and in amount, until, at last, beneath the hand of some more fortunate cultivator, it shall yield more abundant harvests of excellence, and righteousness and happiness, than had ever before luxuriated in the “seed-field of Time.”



**LECTURE VI.**

**1840.**

men in that State have been striving, in vain, to obtain from that same Legislature the passage of a law authorizing school districts to purchase a school library, by levying a tax upon themselves for the purpose. In the memoirs of the Pickwick Club, it is related that they passed a unanimous vote, that any member of said club should be allowed to travel in any part of England, Scotland or Wales, and also to send whatever packages he might please, *always provided that said member should pay his own expenses*. But the Legislature of Maine would not allow their school districts to buy libraries, *even at their own cost!* What latent capacities for enjoyment and for usefulness, which will now lie dormant forever, might not that sum of *eight hundred thousand dollars* have opened for the people of that State, for their children and their children's children, had it been devoted by enlightened minds to worthy objects!

So, too, to give one more example, you will all recollect that outbreak of South Carolina against the general government, in 1832, when a few of the demi-gods of that State stamped upon the earth, and instantly it was covered with armed men; a State convention was held, laws were enacted, extending the jurisdiction of the courts and investing the Executive almost with a Dictator's power, — all under the pretext of defending State rights, — while, for the last thirty years, her whole appropriation for public schools has been less than *forty thousand dollars per annum*; and out of a white population, of *all ages*, of less than 270,000, there are more than 20,000, above the age of twenty years, who cannot read and write; — as though it could long be possible, without more efficient means for the general diffusion of intelligence and virtue, to have any State rights worth defending.

## LECTURE VI.

### ON DISTRICT-SCHOOL LIBRARIES.

I PROPOSE, in the following lecture, to consider the expediency of establishing a School Library in the several School Districts of the State.

The idea of a Common-school Library is a modern one. It originated in the State of New York. In the year 1835, a law was passed by the Legislature of that State, authorizing its respective school districts to raise, by tax, the sum of twenty dollars the first year, and ten dollars in any subsequent year, for the purchase of a Common-school Library. No inducement was held out to the districts to make the purchase, but only a mere power granted; and the consequence was, that for three years this law remained almost a dead letter upon the pages of the statute-book. But in the year 1838, Governor Marcy, in his inaugural address to the Legislature, recommended the appropriation of a part of the income of the United-States deposit fund, or surplus revenue, (so called,) to this object. The recommendation was adopted, and the sum of \$55,000 for three years was set apart to be applied by the districts to the purchase of a District-school Library. The *towns* were also required to raise an equal sum, to be united with the former, and to be applied in the same way.\* How much more does

\* By a law of 1839, this provision for *three* was extended to *five* years; and by a law of 1843, it was made perpetual, with the following modifications: Whenever the number of children in a district, between the ages of



such an act of permanent usefulness redound to the honor of a Governor or a Legislature, than those party contests which occupy so much of public attention for a few days or months, but are then forgotten, or are only remembered to be lamented or condemned !

By the law of April 12, 1837, the Legislature of Massachusetts authorized each school district in the State to raise, by tax, a sum not exceeding thirty dollars for the first year, and ten dollars for any subsequent year, for the purchase of a library and apparatus for the schools. Few districts, however, availed themselves of this power ; and, up to the close of the year 1839, there were but about fifty libraries in all the Common Schools of Massachusetts.

Being convinced of the necessity, and foreseeing the benefits, of libraries in our schools, I submitted to the Board of Education, on the 27th day of March, 1838, a written proposition on that subject. In that communication it was proposed that the Board itself should take measures for the preparation of such a Common-school Library as should be adapted to the wants of the schools, and should at the same time be free from objection on account of partisan opinions in politics, or sectarian views in religion. I had been led to suppose that one of the principal reasons why so few libraries had been purchased, under the law of 1837, was the jealousy entertained against each other by members of different political par-

five and sixteen years, exceeds fifty, and the number of volumes in the library shall exceed one hundred and twenty-five; or when the number of children in a district, between the same ages, is fifty, or less, and the number of volumes belonging to the library shall exceed one hundred, then the district may appropriate the whole or any part of its distributive share of the "library money" "to the purchase of maps, globes, blackboards, or other scientific apparatus, for the use of the school."

ties and of different religious denominations. Though sensible men, and friends of education, almost without exception, were earnest in their desires for a library, yet they either had fears of their own, or encountered apprehension in others, that the public money devoted to this purpose of general utility might be perverted, in the hands of partisans, to the furtherance of sinister ends. The proposition submitted to the Board, as above stated, was accompanied by guards designed to obviate these difficulties. It was favorably received, and immediately acted upon.

Being convinced, however, that nothing could be effected towards the accomplishment of so grand an object, except by going before the people with indubitable facts and irresistible arguments, I set myself to the work of making extensive and minute inquiries throughout the State, respecting the number of public libraries, the number of volumes which each contained, their estimated value, the general character of the books, and also the number of persons who had a right of access to them. I obtained returns from all but sixteen towns, which, being small, had an aggregate population of only 20,966. The result exceeded my worst apprehensions. I found that there were but 299 social libraries in the State. The number of volumes they contained was 180,028. Their estimated value, \$191,538. The number of proprietors, or persons having access to them, in their own right, was only 25,705.

In addition to the above, there were, in the State, from ten to fifteen *town* libraries, — that is, libraries to which all the citizens of the town had a right of access. These contained, in the aggregate, from three to four thousand volumes, and their estimated value was about \$1,400. There were also about fifty school-district libraries, containing about ten thousand volumes, and worth, by

estimation, about \$3,200 or \$3,300. Fifteen of these were in Boston. The number of Public Schools in the State, at that time, was 3,014.

A few of the incorporated academies had small libraries.

There were also a few circulating libraries in different parts of the State,—out of the city of Boston, perhaps twenty,—but it would be charitable to suppose that, on the whole, this class of libraries does as much good as harm.

Of all the social libraries in the State, thirty-six, containing 81,881 volumes, valued at \$130,055, and owned by 8,885 proprietors, or share-holders, belonged to the city of Boston.

It appeared, then, that the books belonging to the public social libraries, in the city of Boston, constituted almost one-half, in number, of all the books in the social libraries of the State, and more than two-thirds of all in value; and yet only about one-tenth part of the population of the city had any right of access to them.

I have said above that the whole number of proprietors, or share-holders, in all the social libraries in the State, was 25,705. Now, supposing that each proprietor or share-holder, in these social libraries, represents, on an average, four persons, (and this, considering the number of share-holders who are not heads of families, is probably a full allowance,) the population represented by them, as enjoying the benefits of these libraries, would be only a small fraction over one hundred thousand; and this, strange and alarming as it may seem, would leave a population, in the State, of more than six hundred thousand, who have no right of participation in those benefits.

I omit here, as not having an immediate connection with my present purpose, to give an account of the libraries belonging to the colleges and other literary and scien

tific institutions in the State. A detailed account of these may be found in my Third Annual Report to the Board of Education.

Do not the above facts show a most extraordinary and wide-spread deficiency of books in our Commonwealth?

But even where books exist, another question arises, hardly less important than the preceding, as to the suitableness or adaptation of the books to the youthful mind. One general remark applies to the existing libraries almost without exception;—the books were written for men, and not for children. The libraries, too, have been collected by men for their own amusement or edification. There is no hazard, therefore, in saying, that they contain very few books, appropriate for the reading of the young, either in the subjects treated of, the intellectual manner in which those subjects are discussed, or the moral tone that pervades the works.\*

\* As descriptive of the general character of the public libraries now existing in the State, I give the following extract from my Third Annual Report:—

The next question respects the character of the books composing the libraries, and their adaptation to the capacities and mental condition of children and youth. In regard to this point, there is, as might be expected, but little diversity of statement. Almost all the answers concur in the opinion, that the contents of the libraries are not adapted to the intellectual and moral wants of the young,—an opinion, which a reference to the titles, in the catalogues, will fully sustain. With very few exceptions, the books were written for adults, for persons of some maturity of mind, and possessed, already, of a considerable fund of information; and, therefore, they could not be adapted to children, except through mistake. Of course, in the whole, collectively considered, there is every kind of books; but probably no other kind, which can be deemed of a useful character, occupies so much space upon the shelves of the libraries, as the historical class. Some of the various histories of Greece and Rome; the History of Modern Europe, by Russell; of England, by Hume and his successors; Robertson's Charles V.; Mavor's Universal History; the numerous Histories of Napoleon, and similar works, constitute the staple of many libraries. And how little do these books contain, which is suitable for children! How little do

Now the object of a Common-school Library is to supply these great deficiencies. Existing libraries are owned

they record but the destruction of human life, and the activity of those misguided energies of men, which have hitherto almost baffled the beneficent intentions of Nature for human happiness! Descriptions of battles, sackings of cities, and the captivity of nations, follow each other, with the quickest movement, and in an endless succession. Almost the only glimpses which we catch of the education of youth, present them as engaged in martial sports, and in mimic feats of arms, preparatory to the grand tragedies of battle;—exercises and exhibitions, which, both in the performer and the spectator, cultivate all the dissocial emotions, and turn the whole current of the mental forces into the channel of destructiveness. The reader sees inventive genius, not employed in perfecting the useful arts, but exhausting itself in the manufacture of implements of war. He sees rulers and legislators, not engaged in devising comprehensive plans for universal welfare, but in levying and equipping armies and navies, and extorting taxes to maintain them, thus dividing the whole mass of the people into the two classes of slaves and soldiers; enforcing the degradation and servility of tame animals upon the former, and cultivating the ferocity and blood-thirstiness of wild animals in the latter. The highest honors are conferred upon men, in whose rolls of slaughter the most thousands of victims are numbered; and seldom does woman emerge from her obscurity—indeed, hardly should we know that she existed—but for her appearance to grace the triumphs of the conqueror. What a series of facts would be indicated, by an examination of all the treaties of peace which history records! they would appear like a grand index to universal plunder. The inference which children would legitimately draw, from reading like this, would be, that the tribes and nations of men had been created only for mutual slaughter, and that they deserved the homage of posterity for the terrible fidelity with which their mission had been fulfilled. Rarely do these records administer any antidote against the inhumanity of the spirit they instil. In the immature minds of children, unaccustomed to consider events under the relation of cause and effect, they excite the conception of magnificent palaces or temples, for bloody conquerors to dwell in, or in which to offer profane worship for inhuman triumphs, without a suggestion of the bondage and debasement of the myriads of slaves, who, through lives of privation and torture, were compelled to erect them; they present an exciting picture of long trains of plundered wealth, going to enrich some city or hero, without an intimation, that, by industry and the arts of peace, the same wealth could have been earned more cheaply than it was plundered; they exhibit the triumphal return of warriors, to be crowned with honors worthy of a god, while they take the mind wholly away from

by the rich, or by those who are in comfortable circumstances. The Common-school Library will reach the

the carnage of the battle-field, from desolated provinces, and a mourning people. In all this, it is true, there are many examples of the partial and limited virtue of patriotism; but few, only, of the complete virtue of philanthropy. The courage held up for admiration is generally of that animal nature, which rushes into danger to inflict injury upon another; but not of that Divine quality, which braves peril for the sake of bestowing good — attributes, than which there are scarcely any two in the souls of men, more different, though the baseness of the former is so often mistaken for the nobleness of the latter. Indeed, if the past history of our race is to be much read by children, it should be rewritten; and, while it records those events, which have contravened all the principles of social policy, and violated all the laws of morality and religion, there should, at least, be some recognition of the great truth, that, among nations, as among individuals, the highest welfare of all can only be effected by securing the individual welfare of each. There should be some parallel drawn between the *historical* and the *natural* relations of the race, so that the tender and immature mind of the youthful reader may have some opportunity of comparing the right with the wrong, and some option of admiring and emulating the former, instead of the latter. As much of history now stands, the examples of right and wrong, whose nativity and residence are on opposite sides of the moral universe, are not merely brought and shuffled together, so as to make it difficult to distinguish between them; but the latter are made to occupy almost the whole field of vision, while the existence of the former is scarcely noticed. It is as though children should be taken to behold, from afar, the light of a city on fire, and directed to admire the splendor of the conflagration, without a thought of the tumult, and terror, and death reigning beneath it.

Another very considerable portion of these libraries, especially where they have been recently formed or replenished, consists of novels, and all that class of books which is comprehended under the familiar designations of "fictions," "light reading," "trashy works," "ephemeral," or "bubble literature," &c. This kind of books has increased, immeasurably, within the last twenty years. It has insinuated itself into public libraries, and found the readiest welcome with people who are not dependent upon libraries for the books they peruse. Aside from newspapers, I am satisfied that the major part of the *unprofessional* reading of the community is of the class of books above designated. Amusement is the object, — mere *amusement*, as contradistinguished from instruction, in the practical concerns of life; as contradistinguished from those intellectual and moral impulses, which turn the mind, both while reading and after the book is closed, to observation, and comparison, and reflection upon the great realities of existence.

difficult of all arts, — the art of Education, — as though silk-culture were more important and more difficult than soul-culture.

During the very last year, the State paid a Militia Bounty of thirty thousand dollars, to soldiers, for three or four trainings. Where are those trainings now? Where now the net proceeds, the value received, the available, visible result, as exhibited in the advancement of society, or the promotion of human welfare? Could thirty thousand dollars have been distributed to sustain the sinking hearts of those females who keep school for a dollar a week, or for ninepence a day, should we not now be able to show some of its tangible fruits, and would not a transfer of the fund to such an object have illustrated quite as well the gallantry of the citizen soldier?

To the American Institute of Instruction, whose noble object it is to improve the *race of children*, the State, after much importunity, has given the sum of three hundred dollars a year for five years, (fifteen hundred dollars,) while to Agricultural Societies, formed for the purpose of improving the *breed of cattle* and a few other kindred objects, it has given from four thousand dollars to six thousand dollars a year, for about twenty years!

In the year 1834, the Legislature made provision for the prospective creation of a School Fund, to be formed from half the proceeds of wild lands in the State of Maine, and from the Massachusetts claim on the general government for militia services rendered during the last war. Through unexpected good fortune, about four hundred thousand dollars have been realized from these sources. Compare this bestowment, however, of a contingent sum, — a part of which was not regarded, at the time, as much better than a gift of half the proceeds of a lottery ticket, provided it should draw a prize, — with its

ideas ; and the *rhetorical*, or the power of giving, by the tones and inflexions of the voice and other natural language, an appropriate expression to feeling. Now most men, whose Common-school education closed twenty or twenty-five years ago, will bear me out in saying, that the mechanical part of reading was the only branch of this accomplishment which, in the great majority of our schools, was then attended to. The intellectual part, which consists in seeing, with the mind's eye, the whole subject, broad, ample, unshadowed, just as the author saw it, was mainly neglected. Consider what a wonderful, — what an almost magical boon, a writer of great genius confers upon us, when we read him intelligently. As he proceeds from point to point in his argument or narrative, we seem to be taken up by him, and carried from hill-top to hill-top, where, through an atmosphere of light, we survey a glorious region of thought, looking freely, far and wide, above and below, and gazing in admiration upon all the beauty and grandeur of the scene. But if we read the same author unintelligently, not one of the splendors he would reveal to us is pictured upon the eye. All is blank. The black and white pages of the book are, to our vision, the outside of the universe in that direction. I never attended any but a Common School until I was sixteen years of age, and up to that time, I had never heard a question asked, either by teacher or scholar, respecting the meaning of a word or sentence in a reading-lesson. In spelling, when words were addressed singly to the eye or ear, we uttered a single mechanical sound ; and in reading, when the words came in a row, the sounds followed in a row ; but it was the work of the organs of speech only, — the reflecting and imaginative powers being all the while as stagnant as the Dead Sea. It was the noise of machinery thrown



out of gear ; and, of course, performing no work, though it should run on forever. The exercises had no more significance than the chattering of magpies or the cawings of ravens ; for it was no part of the school instruction of those days to illustrate and exemplify the power and copiousness of the English language, and, out of its flexible and bright colored words, to make wings, on which the mind could go abroad through height and depth and distance, exploring and circumnavigating worlds.

Nor was our instruction any better in regard to the rhetorical part of reading, which consists in such a compass of voice and inflection of tone, as tend to reproduce the feelings of the speaker in the minds of the hearers. There is this difference between the intellectual and the rhetorical part of reading ; — the intellectual refers to our own ability to perceive and understand ideas, arguments, conclusions ; — the rhetorical refers to the power of exciting in others, by our own enunciation and manner of delivery, the sentiments and emotions which we feel, or which were felt by the author in whose place we stand.

Some men have possessed this power, and some men now possess it, in such perfection, that when they rise to address a concourse of people, — the more numerous the concourse, the better for their purpose, — they forthwith migrate, as it were, into the bodies of the whole multitude before them ; they dwell, like a spirit, within the spirits of their hearers, controlling every emotion and resolve, conjuring up before their eyes whatever visions they please, making all imaginations seem substance and reality, — rousing, inflaming, subduing, so that if they cry War ! every hearer becomes valiant and hot as Mars ; but if they cry Peace ! the fiercest grow gentle and merciful as a loving child. This is a great art ; and when the orator is wise and good and the audience intelligent,

there is no danger, but a delicious illusion and luxury in its enjoyment. Who has not gone beyond the delight, and speculated upon the phenomenon itself, when he has seen a master of the art of music place himself before a musical instrument, and, soon as with nimble fingers he touches the strings, which, but a moment before, lay voiceless and dead, they pour out living and ecstatic harmonies, — as though some celestial spirit had fallen asleep amid the chords, but, suddenly awakening, was celebrating its return to life, by a song of its native elysium? When such music ceases, it seems hardly a figure of speech to say, “the angel has flown.” But what is this, compared with that more potent and exquisite instrument, the well-trained voice? When Demosthenes or Patrick Henry pealed such a war-cry, that all people, wherever its echoes rang, sprang to their arms, and every peaceful citizen, as he listened, felt the warrior growing big within him, and taking command of all his faculties, what instrument or medium was there, by which the soul of the orator was transfused into the souls of his hearers, but the voice? Yet while their bodies stood around, as silent and moveless as marble statuary, there raged within their bosoms a turbulence and whirlwind and boiling, fiercer than if ocean and *Ætna* had embraced. And so, to a great extent, it is even now, when what they uttered is fittingly read. We call this magic, enchantment, sorcery, and so forth; but there is no more magic in it, than in balancing an egg on the smaller end, — each being equally easy when we have learned how to do it.

None, however, of the beauties of rhetorical reading can be attained, unless the intellectual part is mastered. The mechanical reader is a mere grinder of words. If he reads without any attempt at expression, it is mere

without more universal and more efficient means of education than have ever elsewhere existed, all our laws and constitutions are weaker barriers against the assaults of human passion than is a bulrush against the ocean's tide ; — in this country, that document affirmed that “ perhaps it is not desirable that the business of keeping these schools, [the Common Schools,] should become a distinct and separate profession.”

Conceding to the originators and advocates of this scheme for abolishing the Normal Schools, that they were sincerely friendly to the cause of Common Schools, how strikingly does it exhibit the low state of public sentiment in regard to these schools ! Those claiming to be their friends, — men, too, who had been honored by their fellow-citizens with a seat in the Legislature, — thought it unnecessary, even in this country, to elevate the teacher's office into a profession !

I will never cease to protest that I am not bringing forward these facts for the purpose of criminating the motives, or of invoking retribution upon the conduct of any one. My sole and exclusive object is to show to what menial rank the majesty of this cause has been degraded ; — to show that the affections of this community are not clustered around it ; that it is not the treasure which their hearts love and their hands guard ; — in fine, that the sublime idea of a generous and universal education, as the appointed means, in the hands of Providence, for restoring mankind to a greater similitude to their Divine Original, is but just dawning upon the public mind.

But I have done. Let this rapid survey of our condition, by showing us how little has been done, convince us how much remains to be accomplished. Instead of repining at the inadequate conceptions of our predecessors, let us rejoice and shout aloud for joy, that we

court-room, or the pulpit. It is not enough to understand the customary words used at meal-time, or in a dram-shop, or in congressional brawling. I know it is the cry of many a hearer to the speaker, — “Come *down* to my comprehension ;” but I cannot see why any speaker, who speaks good English words, — whether derived originally from the Saxon or the Latin, or any other lawful source, — has not quite as good a right to say to the hearer, “Come *up* to my language.” When a clergyman, or public speaker of any kind, for every hour that he spends in *thinking* out his discourse, must spend two hours in diluting it with watery expressions, in order to have it run so thin that everybody may see to the bottom, he loses not only the greater part of his time, but he loses immensely in the value and impressiveness of his teachings. If, in the heat of composition, and with the light of all his faculties brought to a focus, he kindles with a thought which glows like the orient sun, must he stop and cut it up into farthing candles, lest the weak eyes of some bat or mole should be dazzled by its brightness? But, in all such cases, the hearers lose still more than the speaker. By the half-hour or hour together, they must receive small coins, — cents and four-penny bits, — instead of guineas and doubloons. They are like those ignorant, foreign depositors in one of our city Savings Banks, during a late panic in the money-market, who rushed to the counter, demanding immediate payment ; but when pieces of gold were offered to them, of whose value they had no test, and with whose image and superscription they were not acquainted, they besought the officers, although, as they supposed, at the imminent risk of losing their whole deposit, to pay them in small change, where they felt at home. Just so it is with those who are forever calling upon the speaker to come down to their

comprehension, in regard to his language and style ; for, if he obeys the call and goes very far down, in order to meet them, he necessarily leaves much of the grandeur and beauty and sublimity of his subject behind him. When a speaker is to discourse upon any great theme, — one belonging to any department of a universe which Omniscience has planned and Omnipotence has builded, — ought he not to be allowed a generous liberty in the use of language ? Ought he not to be allowed a scope and amplitude of expression, by which he can display, as on a sky-broad panorama, the infinite relations that belong to the minutest thing ; or, on the other hand, should he not be allowed that condensation of speech, by which the vastest systems of nature can be consolidated into a single word, to be hurled, like a bolt, at its mark ? Is it not as absurd to restrict the speaker, on such occasions, to mere nursery or cradle talk, as it would be to deny sea-room to an admiral, and require him, for our amusement, to manœuvre navies in a mill-pond ?

Suppose a company of Americans should go to France or Germany, and, after picking up a few words in hotels and diligences, should attend the public lecture, the play, or the services of the cathedral, and should there demand of the speakers to keep within the narrow limits of their vocabulary, — I ask, whether it would not be most unreasonable, on the one side, to make such a demand, and impossible, on the other, to comply with it ? And how would the case be altered, though the company should reside there for twenty-one years, if they still remained ignorant of the language of the country ? Now this is just our case. Children, of course, come into the world with just as little knowledge of English as of French and German ; and if they remain here for twenty-one years, without learning English words, how can they expect to understand English speakers ?

I do not mean, by these remarks, to countenance or palliate the folly of those speakers or writers, who are always straining after new words, or swelling forms of expression; and whose breadth and flow of style do not resemble a river, but only a tiny stream whipped into bubbles. It is occasionally our lot to encounter men who seem to have imbibed some mathematical notion, that the power of a word is as the square of its length, and hence they suppose, that what Horace calls seven-foot words\* must have had at least forty-nine times the pith of monosyllables. Such diction and style are as offensive to men of good taste as they are unintelligible to the illiterate. But I do mean, by these remarks, to give a definition of what should be understood by the phrase, — *learning to read*. Unless pupils, therefore, on going out from our schools, can read intelligently any good English book, and understand any speech or discourse expressed in good English words, they cannot, with any propriety, be said to have learned to read. And as no set of reading-books, in our schools, contains anything like the whole circle of words which are in common and reputable use in the pulpit, at the bar, in the senate, or in works of standard literature, it is obvious that a school library is needed to supply the great deficiency, which otherwise would necessarily exist in the language of the present children; and, of course, in the language of the future men and women.

Justice, in reference to this subject, has never been done to the clerical profession. They habitually address audiences, the most promiscuous in point of attainment, — and, so far as it regards the various qualities of language, — its scope, its majesty, its beauty, its melody, its

\* Sesquipedalia verba.

the carpenter and the mason belonging to the same school district, change sides and votes on the expediency of erecting a new schoolhouse, after it had been determined, contrary to expectation, to construct it of brick instead of wood. I have known a bookmaker seek anxiously to learn the opinions of the Board of Education respecting his book, in order to qualify himself to decide upon the expediency of its having been established.

How, then, I ask, is this great interest to sustain itself, amid these disturbing forces of party and sect and faction and clan? how is it to navigate with whirlwinds above and whirlpools below, and rocks on every side?

In the first place, in regard to mere secular and business interests, we are to do no man wrong; we are to show by our deeds, rather than by our words, that we are seeking no private, personal aims, but public ends by equitable means. We are to show that our object is to diffuse light and knowledge, and to leave those who can best bear these tests to profit most by their diffusion. Let us here teach the lessons of justice and impartiality on what, in schools, is called the *exhibitory* method; that is, by an actual exhibition of the principle we would inculcate; and as, for the untaught schoolboy, we bring out specimens, and models and objects, and give practical illustrations by apparatus and diagram to make him acquainted with the various branches of study; so, in the great school of the world, let us illustrate the virtues of generosity, magnanimity, equity and self-sacrifice, by the shining example of our acts and lives.

And again; in regard to those higher interests which the politician and theologian feel called upon to guard and superintend, let us show them that, in supporting a system of Public Instruction, adapted to common wants and to be upheld by common means, we will not en-

all. We should not find one individual in a thousand who knows any thing instructive or pleasurable respecting the wonderful structure of his own body, and the still more wonderful constitution and functions of his own mind; and respecting the laws,—the certain and infallible laws,—of bodily health and mental growth. There is not one individual in a thousand who has any knowledge, so definite as to be beneficial, of the history of our race; or who knows any thing of the sublimer parts of astronomy, or of the magnificent and romantic science of geology,—a science which leads the mind backwards into time as far as astronomy leads it outwards into space;—or of chemistry with its applications to the arts of life; or of the principal laws of natural and mechanical philosophy; or of the origin, history, and processes of those useful arts, by which the common and every-day comforts of life are prepared. Now respecting most, if not all these subjects, every man and woman might possess a liberal fund of information, which would be to them an ever-springing fountain of delight and usefulness. But the uniform policy of governments has been to create a few men of great learning rather than to diffuse knowledge among the many. Literary institutions have been founded, and a nation's treasury almost emptied for their endowment; and when a rare and mighty genius has appeared in any part of the kingdom, he has been summoned to embellish and dignify the court or university; and rarely have such men ever sent back a ray to illumine the dark places of their nativity. The policy of governments has absorbed all light into the centre, instead of radiating it to the circumference. And when, by the combined labor of learned and studious men,—amid mountains of books, amid museums and apparatus and all the appliances of human art,—some new



poor. The former were prepared for adult and educated minds ; the latter is to be adapted to instruct young and unenlightened ones. By the former, books are collected in great numbers, at a few places, having broad deserts between ; by the latter, a few good books are to be sent into every school district in the State, so that not a child shall be born in our beloved Commonwealth, who shall not have a collection of good books accessible to him at all times, and free of expense, within half an hour's walk of his home, wherever he may reside.

My friends, I look upon this as one of the grandest moral enterprises of the age. The honor of first embodying this idea, in practice, belongs to the State of New York ; and how much more glorious is it than the honors of battle ! The execution of this project will carry the elements of thought where they never penetrated before. It will scatter, free and abundant, the seeds of wisdom and virtue in the desert places of the land. It will prove as powerful an agent in the world of mind, as the use of steam has done in the world of matter.

I propose now to notice a few particulars, in which the usefulness of our schools will be so much enlarged in extent, and increased in efficiency, by means of a library, that they will become almost new institutions.

The idea which came down to us from our ancestors, and which has generally prevailed until within a few years, was, that Common District-schools are places where the mass of the children may learn to read, to write, and to cipher.

In regard to the first of these studies, — Reading, — how imperfect was the instruction given ! Good reading may be considered under three heads, — the *mechanical*, or the ability to speak the names of words on seeing them ; the *intellectual*, or a comprehension of an author's

ideas ; and the *rhetorical*, or the power of giving, by the tones and inflexions of the voice and other natural language, an appropriate expression to feeling. Now most men, whose Common-school education closed twenty or twenty-five years ago, will bear me out in saying, that the mechanical part of reading was the only branch of this accomplishment which, in the great majority of our schools, was then attended to. The intellectual part, which consists in seeing, with the mind's eye, the whole subject, broad, ample, unshadowed, just as the author saw it, was mainly neglected. Consider what a wonderful, — what an almost magical boon, a writer of great genius confers upon us, when we read him intelligently. As he proceeds from point to point in his argument or narrative, we seem to be taken up by him, and carried from hill-top to hill-top, where, through an atmosphere of light, we survey a glorious region of thought, looking freely, far and wide, above and below, and gazing in admiration upon all the beauty and grandeur of the scene. But if we read the same author unintelligently, not one of the splendors he would reveal to us is pictured upon the eye. All is blank. The black and white pages of the book are, to our vision, the outside of the universe in that direction. I never attended any but a Common School until I was sixteen years of age, and up to that time, I had never heard a question asked, either by teacher or scholar, respecting the meaning of a word or sentence in a reading-lesson. In spelling, when words were addressed singly to the eye or ear, we uttered a single mechanical sound ; and in reading, when the words came in a row, the sounds followed in a row ; but it was the work of the organs of speech only, — the reflecting and imaginative powers being all the while as stagnant as the Dead Sea. It was the noise of machinery thrown



## LECTURE VI.

### ON DISTRICT-SCHOOL LIBRARIES.

I PROPOSE, in the following lecture, to consider the expediency of establishing a School Library in the several School Districts of the State.

The idea of a Common-school Library is a modern one. It originated in the State of New York. In the year 1835, a law was passed by the Legislature of that State, authorizing its respective school districts to raise, by tax, the sum of twenty dollars the first year, and ten dollars in any subsequent year, for the purchase of a Common-school Library. No inducement was held out to the districts to make the purchase, but only a mere power granted; and the consequence was, that for three years this law remained almost a dead letter upon the pages of the statute-book. But in the year 1838, Governor Marcy, in his inaugural address to the Legislature, recommended the appropriation of a part of the income of the United-States deposit fund, or surplus revenue, (so called,) to this object. The recommendation was adopted, and the sum of \$55,000 for three years was set apart to be applied by the districts to the purchase of a District-school Library. The *towns* were also required to raise an equal sum, to be united with the former, and to be applied in the same way.\* How much more does

\* By a law of 1839, this provision for *three* was extended to *five* years; and by a law of 1843, it was made perpetual, with the following modifications: Whenever the number of children in a district, between the ages of

such an act of permanent usefulness redound to the honor of a Governor or a Legislature, than those party contests which occupy so much of public attention for a few days or months, but are then forgotten, or are only remembered to be lamented or condemned !

By the law of April 12, 1837, the Legislature of Massachusetts authorized each school district in the State to raise, by tax, a sum not exceeding thirty dollars for the first year, and ten dollars for any subsequent year, for the purchase of a library and apparatus for the schools. Few districts, however, availed themselves of this power ; and, up to the close of the year 1839, there were but about fifty libraries in all the Common Schools of Massachusetts.

Being convinced of the necessity, and foreseeing the benefits, of libraries in our schools, I submitted to the Board of Education, on the 27th day of March, 1838, a written proposition on that subject. In that communication it was proposed that the Board itself should take measures for the preparation of such a Common-school Library as should be adapted to the wants of the schools, and should at the same time be free from objection on account of partisan opinions in politics, or sectarian views in religion. I had been led to suppose that one of the principal reasons why so few libraries had been purchased, under the law of 1837, was the jealousy entertained against each other by members of different political par-

five and sixteen years, exceeds fifty, and the number of volumes in the library shall exceed one hundred and twenty-five ; or when the number of children in a district, between the same ages, is fifty, or less, and the number of volumes belonging to the library shall exceed one hundred, then the district may appropriate the whole or any part of its distributive share of the "library money" "to the purchase of maps, globes, blackboards, or other scientific apparatus, for the use of the school."

ties and of different religious denominations. Though sensible men, and friends of education, almost without exception, were earnest in their desires for a library, yet they either had fears of their own, or encountered apprehension in others, that the public money devoted to this purpose of general utility might be perverted, in the hands of partisans, to the furtherance of sinister ends. The proposition submitted to the Board, as above stated, was accompanied by guards designed to obviate these difficulties. It was favorably received, and immediately acted upon.

Being convinced, however, that nothing could be effected towards the accomplishment of so grand an object, except by going before the people with indubitable facts and irresistible arguments, I set myself to the work of making extensive and minute inquiries throughout the State, respecting the number of public libraries, the number of volumes which each contained, their estimated value, the general character of the books, and also the number of persons who had a right of access to them. I obtained returns from all but sixteen towns, which, being small, had an aggregate population of only 20,966. The result exceeded my worst apprehensions. I found that there were but 299 social libraries in the State. The number of volumes they contained was 180,028. Their estimated value, \$191,538. The number of proprietors, or persons having access to them, in their own right, was only 25,705.

In addition to the above, there were, in the State, from ten to fifteen *town* libraries, — that is, libraries to which all the citizens of the town had a right of access. These contained, in the aggregate, from three to four thousand volumes, and their estimated value was about \$1,400. There were also about fifty school-district libraries, containing about ten thousand volumes, and worth, by

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estimation, about \$3,200 or \$3,300. Fifteen of these were in Boston. The number of Public Schools in the State, at that time, was 3,014.

A few of the incorporated academies had small libraries.

There were also a few circulating libraries in different parts of the State,—out of the city of Boston, perhaps twenty,—but it would be charitable to suppose that, on the whole, this class of libraries does as much good as harm.

Of all the social libraries in the State, thirty-six, containing 81,881 volumes, valued at \$130,055, and owned by 8,885 proprietors, or share-holders, belonged to the city of Boston.

It appeared, then, that the books belonging to the public social libraries, in the city of Boston, constituted almost one-half, in number, of all the books in the social libraries of the State, and more than two-thirds of all in value; and yet only about one-tenth part of the population of the city had any right of access to them.

I have said above that the whole number of proprietors, or share-holders, in all the social libraries in the State, was 25,705. Now, supposing that each proprietor or share-holder, in these social libraries, represents, on an average, four persons, (and this, considering the number of share-holders who are not heads of families, is probably a full allowance,) the population represented by them, as enjoying the benefits of these libraries, would be only a small fraction over one hundred thousand; and this, strange and alarming as it may seem, would leave a population, in the State, of more than six hundred thousand, who have no right of participation in those benefits.

I omit here, as not having an immediate connection with my present purpose, to give an account of the libraries belonging to the colleges and other literary and scien

tific institutions in the State. A detailed account of these may be found in my Third Annual Report to the Board of Education.

Do not the above facts show a most extraordinary and wide-spread deficiency of books in our Commonwealth?

But even where books exist, another question arises, hardly less important than the preceding, as to the suitableness or adaptation of the books to the youthful mind. One general remark applies to the existing libraries almost without exception;—the books were written for men, and not for children. The libraries, too, have been collected by men for their own amusement or edification. There is no hazard, therefore, in saying, that they contain very few books, appropriate for the reading of the young, either in the subjects treated of, the intellectual manner in which those subjects are discussed, or the moral tone that pervades the works.\*

\* As descriptive of the general character of the public libraries now existing in the State, I give the following extract from my Third Annual Report:—

The next question respects the character of the books composing the libraries, and their adaptation to the capacities and mental condition of children and youth. In regard to this point, there is, as might be expected, but little diversity of statement. Almost all the answers concur in the opinion, that the contents of the libraries are not adapted to the intellectual and moral wants of the young,—an opinion, which a reference to the titles, in the catalogues, will fully sustain. With very few exceptions, the books were written for adults, for persons of some maturity of mind, and possessed, already, of a considerable fund of information; and, therefore, they could not be adapted to children, except through mistake. Of course, in the whole, collectively considered, there is every kind of books; but probably no other kind, which can be deemed of a useful character, occupies so much space upon the shelves of the libraries, as the historical class. Some of the various histories of Greece and Rome; the History of Modern Europe, by Russell; of England, by Hume and his successors; Robertson's Charles V.; Mavor's Universal History; the numerous Histories of Napoleon, and similar works, constitute the staple of many libraries. And how little do these books contain, which is suitable for children! How little do

Now the object of a Common-school Library is to supply these great deficiencies. Existing libraries are owned

they record but the destruction of human life, and the activity of those misguided energies of men, which have hitherto almost baffled the beneficent intentions of Nature for human happiness! Descriptions of battles, sackings of cities, and the captivity of nations, follow each other, with the quickest movement, and in an endless succession. Almost the only glimpses which we catch of the education of youth, present them as engaged in martial sports, and in mimic feats of arms, preparatory to the grand tragedies of battle;—exercises and exhibitions, which, both in the performer and the spectator, cultivate all the dissocial emotions, and turn the whole current of the mental forces into the channel of destructiveness. The reader sees inventive genius, not employed in perfecting the useful arts, but exhausting itself in the manufacture of implements of war. He sees rulers and legislators, not engaged in devising comprehensive plans for universal welfare, but in levying and equipping armies and navies, and extorting taxes to maintain them, thus dividing the whole mass of the people into the two classes of slaves and soldiers; enforcing the degradation and servility of tame animals upon the former, and cultivating the ferocity and blood-thirstiness of wild animals in the latter. The highest honors are conferred upon men, in whose rolls of slaughter the most thousands of victims are numbered; and seldom does woman emerge from her obscurity—indeed, hardly should we know that she existed—but for her appearance to grace the triumphs of the conqueror. What a series of facts would be indicated, by an examination of all the treaties of peace which history records! they would appear like a grand index to universal plunder. The inference which children would legitimately draw, from reading like this, would be, that the tribes and nations of men had been created only for mutual slaughter, and that they deserved the homage of posterity for the terrible fidelity with which their mission had been fulfilled. Rarely do these records administer any antidote against the inhumanity of the spirit they instil. In the immature minds of children, unaccustomed to consider events under the relation of cause and effect, they excite the conception of magnificent palaces or temples, for bloody conquerors to dwell in, or in which to offer profane worship for inhuman triumphs, without a suggestion of the bondage and debasement of the myriads of slaves, who, through lives of privation and torture, were compelled to erect them; they present an exciting picture of long trains of plundered wealth, going to enrich some city or hero, without an intimation, that, by industry and the arts of peace, the same wealth could have been earned more cheaply than it was plundered; they exhibit the triumphal return of warriors, to be crowned with honors worthy of a god, while they take the mind wholly away from

by the rich, or by those who are in comfortable circumstances. The Common-school Library will reach the

the carnage of the battle-field, from desolated provinces, and a mourning people. In all this, it is true, there are many examples of the partial and limited virtue of patriotism; but few, only, of the complete virtue of philanthropy. The courage held up for admiration is generally of that animal nature, which rushes into danger to inflict injury upon another; but not of that Divine quality, which braves peril for the sake of bestowing good — attributes, than which there are scarcely any two in the souls of men, more different, though the baseness of the former is so often mistaken for the nobleness of the latter. Indeed, if the past history of our race is to be much read by children, it should be rewritten; and, while it records those events, which have contravened all the principles of social policy, and violated all the laws of morality and religion, there should, at least, be some recognition of the great truth, that, among nations, as among individuals, the highest welfare of all can only be effected by securing the individual welfare of each. There should be some parallel drawn between the *historical* and the *natural* relations of the race, so that the tender and immature mind of the youthful reader may have some opportunity of comparing the right with the wrong, and some option of admiring and emulating the former, instead of the latter. As much of history now stands, the examples of right and wrong, whose nativity and residence are on opposite sides of the moral universe, are not merely brought and shuffled together, so as to make it difficult to distinguish between them; but the latter are made to occupy almost the whole field of vision, while the existence of the former is scarcely noticed. It is as though children should be taken to behold, from afar, the light of a city on fire, and directed to admire the splendor of the conflagration, without a thought of the tumult, and terror, and death reigning beneath it.

Another very considerable portion of these libraries, especially where they have been recently formed or replenished, consists of novels, and all that class of books which is comprehended under the familiar designations of "fictions," "light reading," "trashy works," "ephemeral," or "bubble literature," &c. This kind of books has increased, immeasurably, within the last twenty years. It has insinuated itself into public libraries, and found the readiest welcome with people who are not dependent upon libraries for the books they peruse. Aside from newspapers, I am satisfied that the major part of the *unprofessional* reading of the community is of the class of books above designated. Amusement is the object, — mere *amusement*, as contradistinguished from instruction, in the practical concerns of life; as contradistinguished from those intellectual and moral impulses, which turn the mind, both while reading and after the book is closed, to observation, and comparison, and reflection upon the great realities of existence.

poor. The former were prepared for adult and educated minds ; the latter is to be adapted to instruct young and unenlightened ones. By the former, books are collected in great numbers, at a few places, having broad deserts between ; by the latter, a few good books are to be sent into every school district in the State, so that not a child shall be born in our beloved Commonwealth, who shall not have a collection of good books accessible to him at all times, and free of expense, within half an hour's walk of his home, wherever he may reside.

My friends, I look upon this as one of the grandest moral enterprises of the age. The honor of first embodying this idea, in practice, belongs to the State of New York ; and how much more glorious is it than the honors of battle ! The execution of this project will carry the elements of thought where they never penetrated before. It will scatter, free and abundant, the seeds of wisdom and virtue in the desert places of the land. It will prove as powerful an agent in the world of mind, as the use of steam has done in the world of matter.

I propose now to notice a few particulars, in which the usefulness of our schools will be so much enlarged in extent, and increased in efficiency, by means of a library, that they will become almost new institutions.

The idea which came down to us from our ancestors, and which has generally prevailed until within a few years, was, that Common District-schools are places where the mass of the children may learn to read, to write, and to cipher.

In regard to the first of these studies, — Reading, — how imperfect was the instruction given ! Good reading may be considered under three heads, — the *mechanical*, or the ability to speak the names of words on seeing them ; the *intellectual*, or a comprehension of an author's

ideas ; and the *rhetorical*, or the power of giving, by the tones and inflexions of the voice and other natural language, an appropriate expression to feeling. Now most men, whose Common-school education closed twenty or twenty-five years ago, will bear me out in saying, that the mechanical part of reading was the only branch of this accomplishment which, in the great majority of our schools, was then attended to. The intellectual part, which consists in seeing, with the mind's eye, the whole subject, broad, ample, unshadowed, just as the author saw it, was mainly neglected. Consider what a wonderful, — what an almost magical boon, a writer of great genius confers upon us, when we read him intelligently. As he proceeds from point to point in his argument or narrative, we seem to be taken up by him, and carried from hill-top to hill-top, where, through an atmosphere of light, we survey a glorious region of thought, looking freely, far and wide, above and below, and gazing in admiration upon all the beauty and grandeur of the scene. But if we read the same author unintelligently, not one of the splendors he would reveal to us is pictured upon the eye. All is blank. The black and white pages of the book are, to our vision, the outside of the universe in that direction. I never attended any but a Common School until I was sixteen years of age, and up to that time, I had never heard a question asked, either by teacher or scholar, respecting the meaning of a word or sentence in a reading-lesson. In spelling, when words were addressed singly to the eye or ear, we uttered a single mechanical sound ; and in reading, when the words came in a row, the sounds followed in a row ; but it was the work of the organs of speech only, — the reflecting and imaginative powers being all the while as stagnant as the Dead Sea. It was the noise of machinery thrown

out of gear ; and, of course, performing no work, though it should run on forever. The exercises had no more significance than the chattering of magpies or the cawings of ravens ; for it was no part of the school instruction of those days to illustrate and exemplify the power and copiousness of the English language, and, out of its flexible and bright-colored words, to make wings, on which the mind could go abroad through height and depth and distance, exploring and circumnavigating worlds.

Nor was our instruction any better in regard to the rhetorical part of reading, which consists in such a compass of voice and inflection of tone, as tend to reproduce the feelings of the speaker in the minds of the hearers. There is this difference between the intellectual and the rhetorical part of reading ; — the intellectual refers to our own ability to perceive and understand ideas, arguments, conclusions ; — the rhetorical refers to the power of exciting in others, by our own enunciation and manner of delivery, the sentiments and emotions which we feel, or which were felt by the author in whose place we stand.

Some men have possessed this power, and some men now possess it, in such perfection, that when they rise to address a concourse of people, — the more numerous the concourse, the better for their purpose, — they forthwith migrate, as it were, into the bodies of the whole multitude before them ; they dwell, like a spirit, within the spirits of their hearers, controlling every emotion and resolve, conjuring up before their eyes whatever visions they please, making all imaginations seem substance and reality, — rousing, inflaming, subduing, so that if they cry War ! every hearer becomes valiant and hot as Mars ; but if they cry Peace ! the fiercest grow gentle and merciful as a loving child. This is a great art ; and when the orator is wise and good, and the audience intelligent,

there is no danger, but a delicious illusion and luxury in its enjoyment. Who has not gone beyond the delight, and speculated upon the phenomenon itself, when he has seen a master of the art of music place himself before a musical instrument, and, soon as with nimble fingers he touches the strings, which, but a moment before, lay voiceless and dead, they pour out living and ecstatic harmonies, — as though some celestial spirit had fallen asleep amid the chords, but, suddenly awakening, was celebrating its return to life, by a song of its native elysium? When such music ceases, it seems hardly a figure of speech to say, “the angel has flown.” But what is this, compared with that more potent and exquisite instrument, the well-trained voice? When Demosthenes or Patrick Henry pealed such a war-cry, that all people, wherever its echoes rang, sprang to their arms, and every peaceful citizen, as he listened, felt the warrior growing big within him, and taking command of all his faculties, what instrument or medium was there, by which the soul of the orator was transfused into the souls of his hearers, but the voice? Yet while their bodies stood around, as silent and moveless as marble statuary, there raged within their bosoms a turbulence and whirlwind and boiling, fiercer than if ocean and *Ætna* had embraced. And so, to a great extent, it is even now, when what they uttered is fittingly read. We call this magic, enchantment, sorcery, and so forth; but there is no more magic in it, than in balancing an egg on the smaller end, — each being equally easy when we have learned how to do it.

None, however, of the beauties of rhetorical reading can be attained, unless the intellectual part is mastered. The mechanical reader is a mere grinder of words. If he reads without any attempt at expression, it is mere



see-saw and mill-clackery ; if he attempts expression, he is sure to mistake its place, and his flourishes become ridiculous rant and extravagance.

Now no one thing will contribute more to intelligent reading in our schools, than a well-selected library ; and, through intelligence, the library will also contribute to rhetorical ease, grace, and expressiveness. Wake up a child to a consciousness of power and beauty, and you might as easily confine Hercules to a distaff, or bind Apollo to a tread-mill, as to confine his spirit within the mechanical round of a schoolroom, where such mechanism still exists. Let a child read and understand such stories as the friendship of Damon and Pythias, the integrity of Aristides, the fidelity of Regulus, the purity of Washington, the invincible perseverance of Franklin, and he will think differently and act differently all the days of his remaining life. Let boys or girls of sixteen years of age read an intelligible and popular treatise on astronomy and geology, and from that day, new heavens will bend over their heads, and a new earth will spread out beneath their feet. A mind accustomed to go rejoicing over the splendid regions of the material universe, or to luxuriate in the richer worlds of thought, can never afterwards read like a wooden machine, — a thing of cranks and pipes, — to say nothing of the pleasures and the utility it will realize.

Indeed, when a scholar, at the age of sixteen or eighteen years, leaves any one of our Public Schools, I cannot see with what propriety we can say he has learned the art of reading in that school, if he cannot promptly understand, either by reading himself, or by hearing another read, any common English book of history, biography, morals, or poetry ; or if he cannot readily comprehend all the words commonly spoken in the lecture-room, the

court-room, or the pulpit. It is not enough to understand the customary words used at meal-time, or in a dram-shop, or in congressional brawling. I know it is the cry of many a hearer to the speaker, — “Come *down* to my comprehension ;” but I cannot see why any speaker, who speaks good English words, — whether derived originally from the Saxon or the Latin, or any other lawful source, — has not quite as good a right to say to the hearer, “Come *up* to my language.” When a clergyman, or public speaker of any kind, for every hour that he spends in *thinking* out his discourse, must spend two hours in diluting it with watery expressions, in order to have it run so thin that everybody may see to the bottom, he loses not only the greater part of his time, but he loses immensely in the value and impressiveness of his teachings. If, in the heat of composition, and with the light of all his faculties brought to a focus, he kindles with a thought which glows like the orient sun, must he stop and cut it up into farthing candles, lest the weak eyes of some bat or mole should be dazzled by its brightness? But, in all such cases, the hearers lose still more than the speaker. By the half-hour or hour together, they must receive small coins, — cents and four-penny bits, — instead of guineas and doubloons. They are like those ignorant, foreign depositors in one of our city Savings Banks, during a late panic in the money-market, who rushed to the counter, demanding immediate payment ; but when pieces of gold were offered to them, of whose value they had no test, and with whose image and superscription they were not acquainted, they besought the officers, although, as they supposed, at the imminent risk of losing their whole deposit, to pay them in small change, where they felt at home. Just so it is with those who are forever calling upon the speaker to come down to their

comprehension, in regard to his language and style ; for, if he obeys the call and goes very far down, in order to meet them, he necessarily leaves much of the grandeur and beauty and sublimity of his subject behind him. When a speaker is to discourse upon any great theme, — one belonging to any department of a universe which Omniscience has planned and Omnipotence has builded, — ought he not to be allowed a generous liberty in the use of language ? Ought he not to be allowed a scope and amplitude of expression, by which he can display, as on a sky-broad panorama, the infinite relations that belong to the minutest thing ; or, on the other hand, should he not be allowed that condensation of speech, by which the vastest systems of nature can be consolidated into a single word, to be hurled, like a bolt, at its mark ? Is it not as absurd to restrict the speaker, on such occasions, to mere nursery or cradle talk, as it would be to deny sea-room to an admiral, and require him, for our amusement, to manœuvre navies in a mill-pond ?

Suppose a company of Americans should go to France or Germany, and, after picking up a few words in hotels and diligences, should attend the public lecture, the play, or the services of the cathedral, and should there demand of the speakers to keep within the narrow limits of their vocabulary, — I ask, whether it would not be most unreasonable, on the one side, to make such a demand, and impossible, on the other, to comply with it ? And how would the case be altered, though the company should reside there for twenty-one years, if they still remained ignorant of the language of the country ? Now this is just our case. Children, of course, come into the world with just as little knowledge of English as of French and German ; and if they remain here for twenty-one years, without learning English words, how can they expect to understand English speakers ?

I do not mean, by these remarks, to countenance or palliate the folly of those speakers or writers, who are always straining after new words, or swelling forms of expression; and whose breadth and flow of style do not resemble a river, but only a tiny stream whipped into bubbles. It is occasionally our lot to encounter men who seem to have imbibed some mathematical notion, that the power of a word is as the square of its length, and hence they suppose, that what Horace calls seven-foot words\* must have had at least forty-nine times the pith of monosyllables. Such diction and style are as offensive to men of good taste as they are unintelligible to the illiterate. But I do mean, by these remarks, to give a definition of what should be understood by the phrase, — *learning to read*. Unless pupils, therefore, on going out from our schools, can read intelligently any good English book, and understand any speech or discourse expressed in good English words, they cannot, with any propriety, be said to have learned to read. And as no set of reading-books, in our schools, contains any thing like the whole circle of words which are in common and reputable use in the pulpit, at the bar, in the senate, or in works of standard literature, it is obvious that a school library is needed to supply the great deficiency, which otherwise would necessarily exist in the language of the present children; and, of course, in the language of the future men and women.

Justice, in reference to this subject, has never been done to the clerical profession. They habitually address audiences, the most promiscuous in point of attainment, — and, so far as it regards the various qualities of language, — its scope, its majesty, its beauty, its melody, its

\* Sesquipedalia verba.

simplicity, — if they prepare an entertainment of milk for intellectual babes, the full-grown men die of thin blood and inanition ; — if, on the other hand, they bring forward strong meat for men, it cannot be assimilated by the weak organs of the sucklings. Hence multitudes abandon the sanctuary altogether ; and the ignorant, who need its teachings most, are most likely to desert it. How important, then, it is, for all the divine purposes of this profession, to teach children the art of reading, in the true, legitimate, and full sense of that phrase ! and, for this end, a good school library is indispensable.

I proceed to notice another grand distinction between a Common School with a library, and a Common School without one ; and a still more important distinction, between a State, all of whose Common Schools have libraries, and a State in which there are none. This distinction consists in the power of libraries to enlarge the amount of useful knowledge possessed by a community. The State which teaches one new truth to one of its citizens does something ; but how much more, when, by teaching that truth to all, it multiplies its utilities and its pleasures by the number of all the citizens ! The saying of Adam Smith has been quoted thousands of times, that he who makes two blades of grass grow where but one grew before is a public benefactor. But he who doubles the amount of knowledge belonging to a community is a public benefactor as much greater than he who doubles the blades of grass on its soil, as immortal, life-giving truth is better than the perishing flowers of the field. Could we examine all the nations which are called civilized or Christian, we should not find one individual in a thousand worthy to be called *intelligent*, in regard to many kinds of knowledge, which might be possessed, and, for their own safety and happiness, should be possessed by

all. We should not find one individual in a thousand who knows any thing instructive or pleasurable respecting the wonderful structure of his own body, and the still more wonderful constitution and functions of his own mind; and respecting the laws,—the certain and infallible laws,—of bodily health and mental growth. There is not one individual in a thousand who has any knowledge, so definite as to be beneficial, of the history of our race; or who knows any thing of the sublimer parts of astronomy, or of the magnificent and romantic science of geology,—a science which leads the mind backwards into time as far as astronomy leads it outwards into space;—or of chemistry with its applications to the arts of life; or of the principal laws of natural and mechanical philosophy; or of the origin, history, and processes of those useful arts, by which the common and every-day comforts of life are prepared. Now respecting most, if not all these subjects, every man and woman might possess a liberal fund of information, which would be to them an ever-springing fountain of delight and usefulness. But the uniform policy of governments has been to create a few men of great learning rather than to diffuse knowledge among the many. Literary institutions have been founded, and a nation's treasury almost emptied for their endowment; and when a rare and mighty genius has appeared in any part of the kingdom, he has been summoned to embellish and dignify the court or university; and rarely have such men ever sent back a ray to illumine the dark places of their nativity. The policy of governments has absorbed all light into the centre, instead of radiating it to the circumference. And when, by the combined labor of learned and studious men,—amid mountains of books, amid museums and apparatus and all the appliances of human art,—some new

law of nature has been detected, another planet discovered in the heavens, or another curiosity upon the earth,—the rulers of mankind, the depositaries and trustees of a people's welfare, have celebrated the event with jubilee and *Te Deum*, and written themselves down the Solomons of the race. Between England and France,—two kingdoms which now stand and have long stood in the van of science and art,—a strong national jealousy exists as to the relative superiority of their great men. England boasts that it was her Newton whose mighty hand drew aside the veil from the face of the heavens, and revealed the stupendous movements of the solar system. France retorts, that it was left to her La Place to perfect the Newtonian discovery, and to make every part of the celestial mechanism as intelligible as a watch to a watchmaker. England displays her achievements in the natural sciences. France flaunts her trophies in the exact ones. England points to her useful arts; France to those which are born of an elegant imagination. Now all these inventions and discoveries, so far as they go, are well. I rejoice in the existence of learning, anywhere. I contemplate with delight those imperial structures, where, for centuries, a sincere, though often an unintelligent homage has been offered to the divinities of knowledge. I gaze with gladdened eye, through the long vista of those galleries, where the lore of all former times has been gathered. It charms and exalts me to look upon cabinets which are enriched with all the wonders of land and sea; and upon laboratories, where Nature comes and submits herself to our rude and awkward experiments, teaching us, as lovingly as a mother teaches her infant child, and striving to make us understand some of the words of her omnipotent language. I look upon all these with delight, for they are treasures and

storehouses for the instruction and exaltation of mankind. Above all, I hail with inexpressible joy whatever discovery may be made in any department of the immense and infinitely-varied fields of Nature; for I know that all truth is of God and from God, and was sent out to us as a messenger and guide, to lead our faltering steps upwards to virtue and happiness.

But still I mourn. I mourn that this splendid apparatus of means should be restricted to so narrow a circle in the diffusiveness of its blessings. I mourn that numbers so few should be admitted to dwell in the light, while multitudes so vast should remain in outer darkness. I mourn that governments and rulers should have been blind to their greatest glory,—the physical and mental well-being of the millions whose destiny has been placed in their hands. God has given to all mankind capacities for enjoying the delights and profiting by the utilities of knowledge. Why should so many pine and parch, in sight of fountains whose sweet waters are sufficiently copious to slake the thirst of all? The scientific or literary well-being of a community is to be estimated not so much by its possessing a few men of great knowledge, as by its having many men of competent knowledge; and especially is this so, if the many have been stinted in order to aggrandize the few. Was it any honor to Rome that Lucullus had *five thousand* changes of raiment in his wardrobe, while an equal number of her people went naked to furnish his superfluity? How does the farmer estimate the value of his timber-lands?—surely not by here and there a stately tree, though its columnar shaft should shoot up to the clouds, while, all around, there is nothing but dwarfish and scraggy shrubs. One or a few noble trees are not enough, though they rise as high and spread as wide as the sycamore of the Mississippi, but he



wants the whole area covered, as with a forest of banians. And thus should be the growth of these immortal and longing natures which God has given to all mankind. Each mind in the community should be cultivated, so that the intellectual surveyor of a people, — the mental statistician, or he who takes the valuation of a nation's spiritual resources, — should not merely count a few individuals, scattered here and there; but should be obliged to multiply the mental stature of one by the number of all, in order to get his product. The mensuration of a people's knowledge should no longer consist in calculating the possessions of a few, but in obtaining the sum total, or solid contents, in the possession of all. And for this end, the dimensions of knowledge, so to speak, must be enlarged in each geometrical direction; it must not only be extended on the surface, but deepened, until the whole superficies is cubed.

I say I rejoice that, in former times, facilities and incitements for the acquisition of knowledge have been enjoyed even by a few; but if this is to be all, and mankind are to stop where they now are; if, while light gladdens a few eyes, tens of thousands are still to grope on amid the horrors of mental blindness; if, while a few dwell serenely in the upper regions of day, the masses of mankind are to be plunged in Egyptian night, haunted by all the spectres of superstition, and bowing down to the foul idols of appetite and sense; — if such were the prospective destiny of the race, I would pray Heaven for another universal deluge, —

“To make one sop of all this solid globe,” —

to sweep all existing institutions away, and give a clear space for trying the experiment of humanity anew. The

atrocities and abominations of men have proceeded from their ignorance as much as from their depravity ; and rather than that war should continue to devour its nations ; that slavery should always curse, as it now does, both enslaved and enslaver ; that fraud and perfidy between man and man should abound, as they now abound, and that intemperance should rekindle its dying fires ; — rather than all this, I would rejoice to see this solid globe hurled off into illimitable space, and made a tenantless wanderer of the “ vast inane.” Now, who does not see that to gem the whole surface of the State with good schools, and to supply each school with a good library, will be the most effective means ever yet devised by human wisdom for spreading light among the masses of mankind ?

There is another respect in which the establishment of a library in every school district will add a new and grand feature to our Common-school system. The whole object in the foundation and maintenance of our schools, hitherto, has been the education of children, — of minors. Ordinarily, and with very few exceptions, when our children have reached the age of sixteen, eighteen, or, at farthest, of twenty-one years, they have been weaned from the schoolhouse ; and, in a vast proportion of cases, so thoroughly weaned, too, that the very idea of the milk of this mother has been bitterness to their palates ever afterwards. How many, or rather how few, adults ever revisit the schoolhouse, as the spot of early and endearing associations ! How few have been drawn to it by the tie of tender and delightful recollections, as a far wanderer is drawn homeward to visit, with tearful eyes, the almost holy spot where his infancy was cradled, where he slept upon his mother’s breast, and listened to the counsels of his father ! No ! Vast numbers of our children, when

they have served out their regular term in the old, cheerless schoolroom, and are leaving it for the last time, have shaken the dust from off their feet, as a testimony against it. Were the schoolroom an attractive place, why should it be considered as so extraordinary an exploit in a teacher to get the fathers and the mothers of the district to visit their own children in it? Even the school committee, — those whose official duty it was to visit, and watch over the schools, — did not, until recently, make one-fourth part of the visitations required by law. With very few exceptions, too, it was ascertained by the committees, that, although the law had prescribed the number of visitations which they should make, yet it had not prescribed their length; and the consequence was, that the longitude of their visits was inversely as the latitude of their construction.

But by a good school library, the faculty of the school will be enlarged. It will be made to extend its enlightening influences to the old as well as to the young; because every inhabitant of the district, under such conditions as may be deemed advisable, should be allowed to participate in the benefits of the library. Hence the schoolhouse will be not only a nursery for children, but a place of intelligent resort for men. The school will no longer be an institution for diffusing the mere rudiments or instrumentalities of knowledge, but for the bountiful diffusion of knowledge itself. The man will keep up his relation with the school, after he ceases to attend it as a scholar. Though he has mastered all the text-books in the schoolroom, yet he will not have outgrown the school until he has mastered all the books in the library.

And here I would dispel an apprehension, sometimes felt, that children, although supplied with suitable books, will contract no fondness for them. Since submitting the

plan to the Board of Education, for the establishment of school libraries, I have sent out not less than a thousand letters soliciting information respecting the existence, magnitude and quality of public libraries of all kinds; and I have also availed myself of all opportunities furnished by personal intercourse, to ascertain the habits and means of our people in regard to reading. After all these opportunities for information, I am able to say, that I have never heard of a single instance where a well-selected library for children has run down or run out through abandonment or indifference on their part. I have heard of many instances where grown people, during some transient spasm of literature or vanity, have collected a library for themselves, whose books, after a short time, were read, as bills are so often read in our legislative bodies, — by their titles only; and, at last, the office of librarian has been merged in that of auctioneer. But I have never known one such case in regard to children's libraries.

But suppose an unfortunate case of neglect or abuse of the library privileges should sometimes, or even frequently, occur, would it furnish a valid argument against the measure? Does the gardener refuse to plant his garden, or the husbandman his fields, because every seed that he casts into the earth does not spring up and yield its thirty, its sixty, or its hundred fold? Nay, if, through accident or misfortune, the whole expected growth fails, does he not, with undiminished faith and alacrity, commit new seed to the soil, confiding in the veracity of the Promiser and the fulfilment of the promise, that, if ye sow bountifully, ye shall reap also bountifully?

There is another advantage of a good school library, — not so obvious, perhaps, as those already mentioned, — but one which I deem of no small importance. A library

will produce one effect upon school children, and upon the neighborhood generally, before they have read one of the books, and even if they should never read one of them. It is in this way:—The most ignorant are the most conceited. Unless a man knows that there is something more to be known, his inference is, of course, that he knows every thing. Such a man always usurps the throne of universal knowledge, and assumes the right of deciding all possible questions. We all know that a conceited dunce will decide questions extemporaneously, which would puzzle a college of philosophers, or a bench of judges. Ignorant and shallow-minded men do not see far enough to see the difficulty. But let a man know that there are things to be known, of which he is ignorant, and it is so much carved out of his domain of universal knowledge. And for all purposes of individual character, as well as of social usefulness, it is quite as important for a man to know the extent of his own ignorance as it is any thing else. To know how much there is that we do not know, is one of the most valuable parts of our attainments; for such knowledge becomes both a lesson of humility and a stimulus to exertion. Let it be laid down as a universal direction to teachers, when students are becoming proud of their knowledge, to spread open before them some pages of the tremendous volume of their ignorance.

Now those children who are reared without any advantages of intelligent company, or of travel, or of books, — which are both company and travel, — naturally fall into the error of supposing that they live in the centre of the world, that all society is like their society, or, if different from theirs, that it must be wrong; and they come, at length, to regard any part of this vast system of the works of man, and of the wisdom of God, which conflicts with

their home-bred notions, as baneful, or contemptible, or non-existent. They have caught no glimpse of the various and sublime sciences which have been discovered by human talent and assiduity; nor of those infinitely wise and beautiful laws and properties of the visible creation, in which the Godhead has materialized his goodness and his power, in order to make them perceptible to our senses; — and hence they naturally infer that they know all knowable things, and have “learnt out;” — that they have exhausted the fulness of Deity, and into their nutshell capacities have drained dry the fountains of Omniscience. Now, when this class of persons go out into the world and mingle with their fellow-men, they are found to be alike useless on account of their ignorance, and odious for their presumption. And if a new idea can be projected with sufficient force to break through the incrustations of folly and prejudice which envelop their souls, and with sufficient accuracy of aim to hit such small globules, they appear as ridiculous, under its influence, as did the mouse, which was born in the till of a chest, and, happening one day to rear itself upon its hind-legs and to look over into the body of the chest, exclaimed, in amazement, that he did not think the universe so large! A library, even before it is read, will teach people that there is something more to be known.

An incidental advantage will often accrue from this library enterprise, which I cannot pass by in silence. Suppose the most intelligent and respectable portion of the State to be deeply convinced of the expediency of a school library, and, therefore, to send up an earnest appeal to the Legislature, for some assistance or bounty to enable the districts to procure one. Suppose that the Legislature should offer to contribute a certain sum, on condition that the districts would raise an equal sum, for

the purpose. Doubtless, on the part of a large number of districts, there would be great alacrity in complying with the conditions prescribed. But still, the number of districts and even of towns will not be inconsiderable, where Ignorance and Mammon bear such sway, that the majority of voters will refuse to grant even this pittance for the welfare of their children. It is in this class of cases that the incidental advantages to which I refer will be realized. In most of such districts or towns, there will be some individual or individuals, — of narrow means, but of a boundless soul, — who will at once give the requisite sum, and thus secure the object. Now these occasional or special opportunities to do a good deed are of inestimable value. They stir up the generous emotions of our nature from a depth, where they might otherwise have lain stagnant forever. They awaken within us a delightful surprise at our own capabilities of usefulness and happiness. Our sordid habit is, to call every unexpected occurrence of good fortune happening to ourselves *a god-send*; but there is no such god-send as the divine prompting to do good to others. Let an unforeseen occasion of beneficence be presented to a benevolent man, and let the merits of the case be made visible to him by their own beautiful light; — a resolve to act, at once flashes upon his mind, and the generous deed is done; — not done from ostentation, or the love of praise, or from any low or sordid aim; but done because it is right and lovely, and in harmony with his better nature; and lo! in the bosom of that man the fountains of immortal joy burst open, and such peace and gladness and exaltation pervade and dilate his soul, that he would not barter one moment of their fruition for an eternity of selfish pleasures. When a majority of the district belong to the firm of Hunks, Shirk & Co., then Mr. Goodman must supply

the library, and the next generation will rise up and bless him.

The effects of a habit of reading, in furnishing home and fireside attractions for children, and thus keeping them from vicious companions, and from places of vicious resort, are so obvious, that I shall not here dwell upon them; but content myself with referring to one more of the unenumerated and innumerable advantages of a well-chosen library for our schools;—I mean the efficacy of good books in expelling bad ones. A true friend of our country and our race is not satisfied with knowing that we are a reading people;—he asks impatiently, what it is that we read. That there is an alarming amount of vain and pernicious reading in our community, no observing person will deny. For unchastened imaginations and perverted morals, there is a fascination in accounts of battles, shipwrecks, murders and piracies; and many people gloat over those demoralizing police reports in the newspapers, in which the foul scenes of darkness and depravity are brought to light, and made themes for jest and merriment. But have we taught children to read, for the sake of enlarging their acquaintance with impurity and immorality? Fiction, too, from the plump novel of two volumes to the lean newspaper story of two columns, together with the contents of light and fanciful periodicals, constitutes the staple reading of a vast number of our people. Now I believe it to be no exaggeration to say, that ninety-nine parts in every hundred of all the novels and romances extant are as false to truth and nature, to all verisimilitude to history and to the affairs of men, as though they had been written, not by lunarians, but by lunatics themselves. I mean, that, if we, as men and women, were to act as novel-writers make their men and women act, the results upon our fortunes and lives



would bear no resemblance to the fortunes and lives of the fictitious personages they describe. The novelist makes godlike heroes and benefactors of the race of those who never studied and toiled and sacrificed for the welfare of mankind ; and, just so far as he does this, he is contradicted by the testimony of universal history and experience. His works are often bloated with a maudlin sentiment, wholly unkindred and alien to that healthy humanity, which, by the combined action of intellect and benevolence, not only perceives, but fulfils, the law of love. Often, too, he robes impurity in the garments of light, and thus sets at defiance all the laws of the moral universe ; or he deems it poetic justice to reward the holy sacrifices of virtue by the base coin of wordly honors or wealth. The mind, when fed on mere fantasies and etherealities, has no vigor for the stern duties of life ; it is borne away by every illusion, like a bulrush upon the tide.

The prevalence of novel-reading creates a host of novel-writers ; and the readers and writers, by action and reaction, increase the numbers of each other. Hence great capacities for usefulness are lost to the world, and the most important of human duties remain unperformed. For many of the sons and daughters of Adam, this is a world of perplexity and suffering and inexpressible anguish ; it is a world where innocent nerves are laid bare to all the aggressions of want and disease, and where men sink into pitfalls of ruin, which the light of a little knowledge would have revealed, and from which kindly counsels would have saved them. What is worst of all, — it is a world where guiltless children are led, as by the hand, into dangers and temptations ; or rather they are propelled into dangers and temptations by forces of which they are unconscious, and over which they have no control ; and in these perils they struggle for a moment, and then

sink into horrible depths of crime and wretchedness, which, by an unholy influence, harden our hearts against them as much as they harden their hearts against virtue. Society is spotted all over with moral leprosy ; and hot tears, more bitter than the waters of Marah, are furrowing innocent cheeks ; and while this actual sin and suffering abound, we cannot spare the finest geniuses of the race to spend their lives in creating Worlds of Shadow ; nor can we allow the most educated of our people to escape from the great work of solacing and redeeming mankind, to revel in the brilliant but bodiless realms of fancy. Every hand and every hour should be devoted to rescue the world from its insanity of guilt, and to assuage the pangs of human hearts with balm and anodyne. To pity distress is but human ; to relieve it is Godlike. But I have never found that those who weep most freely over fictitious pain have keener susceptibilities than others for real woe. What an absolute inversion of the whole moral nature does it suppose, to find delight in tracing the fortunes of imaginary beings, while living in the midst of such actual sufferings as ought to dissolve the soul into a healing balm for their relief, without recognizing their existence. It is said, indeed, that Dickens, — the last king whom the world of novel-readers has seated upon its precarious throne, — has attributes of humanity which distinguish him from his predecessors. It is said that he looks over and beyond the splendid circles of opulence and fashion, and selects his objects of interest and sympathy from among the hitherto outcast and forsaken of the world. But I must say again, that I have not seen any fresh outflowing of compassion, any swelling of the scanty rills of benevolence towards the poor, the ignorant, the helpless, the misguided, among the gay and affluent circles who vindicate their homage to this

new sovereign, because he illumines his pages with the glow of a kindlier humanity. To those who, — while surrounded with luxuries and superfluities, and defended by golden guards against cold and hunger, and all the privations and temptations of poverty, — read, breathless and tearful, the story of “Little Nell,” let me say, there is a “Little Nell” in the next street, or at the next door, of you all, — some hapless child, cast, desolate and forlorn, upon the bleak shores of Time, having no friend in the abandoned mother that bore her, and wandering, through all the years of infancy and childhood, as in one perpetual and tempestuous night of fear and suffering; while the opulent and the educated, reclining on silken couches, in splendid saloons, expend a barren sympathy over woes that never were felt. Throughout our land, in city and in country, groups and companies of innocent children, — the offspring of intemperance or profligacy, — are tossed for an hour upon the weltering tide of life; but hearing no voice of sympathy, seeing no hand outstretched for their deliverance, they sink to rise no more.

As when the young of land-birds, in the spring,  
Quit the warm nest, and spread the untaught wing,  
Some whirlwind blast, descending from the north,  
Wheels them on high, and drives them furious forth  
Far out to sea. Alas, the fated brood!  
The empty sky's above; below, the yawning flood.  
Backward they turn to win their native vale,  
And strive, with desperate wing, to stem the gale.  
In vain! They fall, by fear and toil opprest,  
Till the rude wave assaults their throbbing breast.  
Once more! for life! they mount with piteous cry,  
Then, one by one, they fall, they shriek, they die!

Even thus, by tens and by hundreds, perish innocent children, at our own doors, — lost to all the delights of life, lost in the deeper perdition of the soul, — through lack

of human sympathy in self-styled Christians. Such children are the victims of temptations and exposures, which, to all moral intents, they are as incapable of resisting, as is the half-fledged young of the land-bird to defy the mingled might of ocean and storm. Is it as noble, is it as like the Divine Exemplar, to dote over imaginary creations of loveliness and purity, as to create and foster that loveliness and purity ourselves in hearts otherwise perverted and lost? To describe possible happiness, or linger over its enchanting delineations, is it, or can it be, like rescuing children from the very throat of the whirlpool which is carrying them down to destruction; is it like bestowing happiness, by our own efforts, upon our sorrowing fellow-mortals? Look, my friends, for one moment, around you, and see what things God accomplishes without our assistance; then look again, and see for the accomplishment of what things God honors us by demanding our aid. To combine insensate elements into a flower; to spread the rainbow across the dark folds of the retreating storm; to emblaze the deep recesses of the firmament with new constellations;—these works God has left to blind mechanical and organic laws. But to rear the amaranth of virtue for a celestial soil; to pale the diamond's glow by the intenser effulgence of genius; to pencil, as with living flame, a rainbow of holy promise and peace upon the blackness and despair of a guilty life; to fit the spirits of weak and erring mortals to shine forever, as stars, amid the Host of Heaven;—for these diviner and more glorious works, God asks our aid; and He points to the children who have been evoked into life, as the objects of our labor and care. One drop of baptismal water poured upon the infant's head, from the holy font of wisdom and love, will quench more of the fires of guilt, than an ocean of consecrated waters can afterwards

extinguish. And is it not time for the self-styled disciples of Christ to repel the bitter irony of their name? Is it not time for them to imitate the Divine Master on whose name they call, and, like him, surrender the pleasures of luxury and sense, that they may go about doing good? Is it not time for them to seek out the children of wretchedness, — and so much the more as they are the more wretched, — and fold them in their arms, and bless them by instruction and example? The garden of an earthly paradise for mankind can never be entered but through the Garden of Gethsemane. Yet where are they who sweat drops of blood in their agony for the welfare of the race; where are they who spurn the honors and distinctions of an earthly ambition, and say, of the proffered empire of the world, that it is an offence; where are they whose striving soul sleep does not visit at the coming-on of night, whose head is pillowless, though surrounded by chambers of Oriental magnificence, and who enter the path of duty with unfaltering step, although in the vista's distant perspective there stands the fatal cross? If Peter were one of us, and should stand unconcerned in the midst of the rising generation, and put forth no helping hand to succor them, he would need no oath to seal his perfidy to his Master, — forsworn by apathy alone!

Oh! how forever beautiful and divine in the sight of man; how holy in the eye of Heaven; how gladdening in the retrospect of all coming ages; if, instead of surrendering their cultivated powers to the dreams and fantasies of romance, the daughters of opulence and leisure would awaken to the realities of the only true and worthy existence, and would seek an enduring happiness, — where they would be sure to find it, — in carrying knowledge and virtue and joy to the children of poverty and

wretchedness ! Let them lead these darkling wanderers to the joyful light of knowledge. Let them shake free the wings of immortal spirits, now so clogged with the mire of earth, that they cannot soar upward to heaven. Beneath the feet of such angel ministers, as they go on their errands of mercy and love, the very earth is hallowed ; and the air is made fragrant and luminous by their tones and smiles of affection. Surely, no thanksgiving offered to God can be so grateful as deeds of charity done to suffering childhood.

But how, I ask, can that pernicious reading, which has done at least as much as any thing else to separate feeling from action, to sever the natural connection between benevolent impulses and benevolent deeds, to dissociate emotions of pity for distress from a desire to succor and relieve it, — how can the flood of this reading be stayed ? I answer, that much can be done by the substitution of books and studies which expound human life and human duty as God has made them to be. Neither by the force of public opinion, nor by any enactment of the Sovereign Legislature, can the noxious works which now infest the community be gathered into one Alexandrian pile, and by the application of one torch, the earth be purified from their contaminations. No ! It must be done, if done at all, — in the expressive language of Dr. Chalmers, — “ by the expulsive power of a new affection.” A purer current of thought at the fountain can alone wash the channels clean. For this purpose, I know of no plan, as yet conceived by philanthropy, which promises to be so comprehensive and efficacious as the establishment of good libraries in all our school districts, open respectively to all the children in the State, and within half an hour’s walk of any spot upon its surface.

**NOTE.** — On the 3d day of March, 1842, the Legislature passed a Resolve offering a bounty of \$15 to each school district in the State which would appropriate \$15, — both sums to be expended for the purchase of a school library. By subsequent Resolves, enlarging the provisions of the former, it is now provided that where a district contains more than twice sixty children, three times sixty, &c., it may draw as many times \$15 from the State Treasury as the number sixty is contained in the number of its children, on condition of raising an equal sum. Towns not districted may draw in the same proportion. A great majority of the districts in the State have already availed themselves of the privileges of these Resolves.

**LECTURE VII.**

**1840.**





## LECTURE VII.

### ON SCHOOL PUNISHMENTS.

MY subject is *Punishment*, and, more especially, CORPORAL PUNISHMENT, in our schools. Important questions are agitated, respecting its rightfulness and expediency, under any circumstances ; and, if rightful and expedient at all, then respecting its mode, its extent, and the circumstances under which it should be inflicted. I despair of reconciling the conflicting opinions which are entertained on these topics ; but may I not hope to elucidate some points pertaining to them, and perhaps to lessen the distance between the extremes of doctrine now existing amongst us ?

All punishment, considered by itself, is an evil. In other words, all pain, considered by itself, is an evil ; and the immediate object of punishment is the infliction of pain. I think that no one who does not altogether deny the existence of evil will deny that pain, abstracted from all antecedents and consequences, is evil ; and, if any one denies that evil exists, I answer him in the language of Soame Jenyns, “let him have the toothache, or get into a law-suit.” [The ultimate object of punishment is to avert an evil greater than itself. We justify ourselves for inflicting it, — not because it is a pleasure to us to do so, — for that would be diabolical ; nor wholly because the culprit deserves it ; for if we could arrest him and reform him, as well without the infliction of pain as with it, no benevolent man would prescribe the pain ; and,

amongst all civilized nations, when a malefactor, who has been condemned to death, becomes insane, he is respited until reason is restored ; although it is clear that the loss of reason cannot expiate the past offence, and, therefore, that the *deserts* of the transgressor remain the same as before. We do not then inflict punishment wholly because it is deserved ; but we inflict it that we may ward off a greater evil by a less one, — a permanent evil by a temporary one. We administer it, only as a physician sometimes administers poison to a sick man, — not because poison is congenial to the healthy system, nor, indeed, because poison is congenial to the diseased system ; but because it promises to arrest a fatal malady until appropriate remedial measures can be taken. Would any person be upheld or approved, by a sane community, for inflicting the pain of punishment upon a child, when he could have produced the desired object as well without it ? / Punishment, then, taken *by itself*, is always to be considered as an evil. / The practical deduction from this principle, is, that the evil of punishment should always be compared with the evil proposed to be removed by it ; and, in those cases only where the evil removed preponderates over the evil caused, is punishment to be tolerated. The opposite course would purchase exemption from a less evil, by voluntarily incurring a greater one.

These principles seem clear, and for their support I believe we have the concurrent opinion of all writers of any note, on jurisprudence or ethics, and of all sensible men. In following out these principles to their application, I fear I may fall into error ; and I proceed, with unfeigned diffidence, to a further development of my views. Should I differ from others, I only ask, — what I am most ready, on my own part, to give, — a candid reconsideration of the points of disagreement.

Let me premise, that there are two or three peculiar difficulties attending the discussion of this subject. / If the truth lies, as I believe it does, in the mean, and not in either of the extremes, then those ultraists who believe in the doctrine either of no-punishment, or of all-punishment, will be prone to seize upon arguments or concessions, on their own side, to reject those on the other side, and thus confirm themselves in their respective ultraisms; and perhaps, at the same time, bring forward a charge of inconsistency. / Probably there is no subject, which it is more difficult for a speaker to balance well in his own mind, and to leave well balanced in the minds of his hearers.

/ Again; it is undoubtedly true that most men have formed their opinions on the subject of punishment, more from feeling and less from reflection, than perhaps on any other subject whatever. / In conversing upon this topic, I have almost uniformly observed, that my collocutor has advanced positive, decided general opinions, and then adverted to some particular fact, in his own experience or observation, on which the general opinions had been founded. But sound opinions are usually the result of an extended survey of facts. Here, however, the intensity with which a single fact has been felt is a substitute for numbers. The judgment of many a man has been decided, — if not enlightened, — respecting the whole subject of punishment, by one vivid impression made, while a schoolboy, on his back or hand. Two boys fight. One of them gets seriously injured. The schoolmaster punishes the victor. The vanquished boy and his parents approve the avenging dispensation, and become strenuous advocates for high-toned discipline. The victorious, but punished boy, with his parents, question the policy, perhaps deny altogether the right of chastisement. And

thus the same fact gives rise to opposite opinions, according to the relation sustained towards it by the parties.

' Probably on no other subject, pertaining to Education, is there so marked a diversity or rather hostility of opinion as on this ; nor on any other, such perseverance, not to say obstinacy, in adhering to opinions once formed.<sup>1</sup> Where feeling predominates, there is a strong tendency to ultraism ; and questions respecting punishment are more often decided by sensation than by reflection. Hence the extremes to which opinions run, and the positiveness and dogmatism with which they are advocated by the partisans of each side. In the public station which it is my lot to fill, I have been present at many discussions on this subject, and have held conversation and correspondence respecting it with a great number of individuals, in all parts of the Commonwealth ; and I find one party strenuously maintaining, that improvement in our schools can advance only so far and so fast as bodily chastisement recedes, while the other party regard a teacher or a parent, divested of his instruments of pain, as a discrowned monarch. It is no exaggeration to say, judging from their tone of earnestness and confidence, that there are men who would destroy all trees and shrubbery in order to abolish the means of flagellation, while others seem devoutly to believe that a good supply of the materials for whipping is the final cause for trees growing ; and they would always locate a schoolhouse in convenient vicinity to a hickory or birchen grove,—not for the shade, but for the substance.

The first point which I shall consider, is, whether *corporal* punishment is ever necessary in our schools. As preliminary to a decision of this question, let us take a brief survey of facts. We have, in this Commonwealth, about one hundred and eighty thousand \* children be-

\* Now, (1845,) above 192,000.

tween the ages of four and sixteen years. All these children are not only legally entitled to attend our public schools, but it is our great desire to increase that attendance, and he who increases it is regarded as a reformer. All that portion of these children who attend school, enter it from that vast variety of homes which exist in the State. From different households, where the widest diversity of parental and domestic influences prevail, the children enter the schoolroom, where there must be comparative uniformity. At home, some of these children have been indulged in every wish, flattered and smiled upon, for the energy of their low propensities, and even their freaks and whims have been enacted into household laws. Some have been so rigorously debarred from every innocent amusement and indulgence, that they have opened for themselves a way to gratification, through artifice and treachery and falsehood. Others, from vicious parental example, and the corrupting influences of vile associates, have been trained to bad habits and contaminated with vicious principles, ever since they were born; — some being taught that honor consists in whipping a boy larger than themselves; others that the chief end of man is to own a box that cannot be opened, and to get money enough to fill it; and others again have been taught, upon their fathers' knees, to shape their young lips to the utterance of oaths and blasphemy. Now, all these dispositions, which do not conflict with right more than they do with each other, as soon as they cross the threshold of the schoolroom, from the different worlds, as it were, of homes, must be made to obey the same general regulations, to pursue the same studies, and to aim at the same results. In addition to these artificial varieties, there are the natural differences of temperament and disposition.

Again ; there are about three thousand public schools in the State, in which are employed, in the course of the year, about five thousand different persons, as teachers, including both males and females. Excepting a very few cases, these five thousand persons have had no special preparation or training for their employment, and many of them are young and without experience. These five thousand teachers, then, so many of whom are unprepared, are to be placed in authority over the one hundred and eighty thousand children, so many of whom have been perverted. Without passing through any transition state, for improvement, these parties meet each other in the schoolroom, where mutiny and insubordination and disobedience are to be repressed, order maintained, knowledge acquired. He, therefore, who denies the necessity of resorting to punishment, in our schools, — and to corporal punishment, too, — virtually affirms two things : — first, that this great number of children, scooped up from all places, taken at all ages and in all conditions, can be deterred from the wrong and attracted to the right, without punishment ; and secondly, he asserts that the five thousand persons whom the towns and districts employ to keep their respective schools, are now, and in the present condition of things, able to accomplish so glorious a work. Neither of these propositions am I, at present, prepared to admit. If there are extraordinary individuals, — and we know there are such, — so singularly gifted with talent and resources, and with the divine quality of love, that they can win the affection, and, by controlling the heart, can control the conduct of children, who, for years, have been addicted to lie, to cheat, to swear, to steal, to fight, still I do not believe there are now five thousand such individuals in the State, whose heavenly services can be obtained for this transforming work.

And it is useless, or worse than useless, to say, that such or such a thing can be done, and done immediately, without pointing out the agents by whom it can be done. One who affirms that a thing can be done, without any reference to the persons who can do it, must be thinking of miracles. If the position were, that children may be so educated from their birth, and teachers may be so trained for their calling, as to supersede the necessity of corporal punishment, except in cases decidedly monstrous, then I should have no doubt of its truth; but such a position must have reference to some future period, which we should strive to hasten, but ought not to anticipate.

Coinciding, then, with those who assert the necessity of occasional punishment, and even of occasional corporal punishment, in our schools, it seems to me that the more strenuous of its advocates are disposed to give too latitudinarian a construction to one argument in its favor. They quote and apply, as though there were no qualification or limit to their applicability, such passages as these from the Proverbs of Solomon:—“He that spareth the rod hateth his son, but he that loveth him chastiseth him betimes.” “Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child, but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.” “Withhold not correction from the child, for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die.” “Thou shalt beat him with a rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell.” “The rod and reproof give wisdom,” &c., &c. Now if these passages, and such as these, are applicable, in their unqualified and literal sense, to our times, then, indeed, we must admit that the rod is the emblem of all the Christian graces. But, by the Mosaic law, he that smote his father or his mother was to be put to death; and why is there not as much reason to suppose that the latter of these commands remains unabrogated and un-



qualified, as well as the former; and, therefore, that the true remedy for those who now make forcible resistance to parental control, is, not the House of Reformation for juvenile offenders, but the gallows? But can any one suppose that the passages above cited, and others of a kindred nature, were to be taken without any qualification, even in the age in which they were written? Can any one suppose that they were designed for all children alike, and to be exclusive of all other practicable means to deter from wrong-doing? And yet, there is no express limitation. If alike applicable to all children, at that time, and if they remain unmodified, then they are applicable to all children, and alike, at the present time. But again, I say, can any one suppose that the domestic discipline of a people, like the stiff-necked Jews, so accustomed to spectacles and histories of blood and carnage; by whose code so many offences were capital; who massacred men, women and children, — whole cities at a time, — and sawed asunder their prisoners, and tore them to pieces under harrows of iron; — can any one suppose that modes of parental discipline, in a land rife and red with such spectacles, are to be literally copied in a state of civilization so different as ours, without the most positive and unambiguous injunctions? One fact is worthy of remark in passing. If the doctrines of Solomon are to be taken literally, then he must have departed from them most egregiously, in regard to his own household; or those doctrines must have failed of their intended effect, for his son and his grandson proved to be two of the most atrocious and heaven-contemning sinners that ever sat upon the throne at Jerusalem.

There is one school, however, where I would give to these declarations of Solomon the freest interpretation, applying them to all its pupils, and shivering rods by the

bundle, — that is, the School for Scandal. There, let the motto be, “Lay on, Macduff.”

But a conclusion in favor of the rightfulness or admissibility of punishment, in school, does nothing towards sanctioning an indefinite amount of it. Its rightfulness is limited by its object; and its only justifiable object is to restrain from the commission of offences, until remedial means can be brought to bear upon the offender. Beyond this limit, punishment becomes punishable itself. The object of punishment is, prevention from evil; it never can be made impulsive to good. Its office is to seize upon the contemner of laws, and stop him in his career of wrong, and hold him still, until by earnest expostulation, by kind advice, by affectionate persuasion, by a clear display of the nature of the offence committed, and the duty and the benefits of an opposite course, the offender can be led to inward repentance, and to resolutions of amendment.— To produce such repentance and resolutions, is a work of time, of skill, of wisdom, of sympathy. It is a work which cannot be done in a minute, and it is because it cannot be done in a minute, that punishment becomes justifiable, as a means of preventing a continuance or repetition of the wrong, until a reformation can be effected in the culprit's mind. In all cases, therefore, the very fact of punishment supposes that a great deal else is to be done. By punishment, the offender is intercepted in the commission or the pursuit of wrong; but it is a wholly different task, and accomplished by wholly different means, to bring him back to the right, and to make him see it and love it. Whoever, then, inflicts punishment, and stops there, omits the weightiest part of his duty; and such omission goes far to take away all justification for the punishment itself.

I have said that punishment, in itself, and abstracted

from its hoped-for consequences, is always an evil. I wish to add a few considerations showing that it is a very great evil.

~ Punishment excites fear; it is, indeed, the primary object of punishment to excite fear; and fear is a most debasing, dementing passion. ~ It may be proper to say, that I use the word *fear*, in this connection, as implying an intense activity of cautiousness, or apprehension for personal safety; and not as partaking at all of the idea of reverence or awe, in which sense it is sometimes used, in reference to the Supreme Being, — as when it is said, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” It is the former species of fear only that is appealed to by the infliction of pain, and not one of the virtues ever grows under the influence of that kind of fear. Such fear may check the growth of vices, it is true; and this is the strongest remark that can be made in its defence; but it has, at the same time, a direct tendency to check the growth of every virtue, because fear of pain is not an atmosphere in which the virtues flourish; so that even the negative good which it produces, in deterring from wrong, is accompanied by the infliction of some positive harm. Let any person revert to his own experience, and then answer the question, whether he was as competent to think clearly, or to act wisely, when under the influence of fear, as when calm and self-possessed. ~ Fear may make a man run faster, but it is always *from*, not *towards* the post of duty. Look at a man in an agony of fear; he is powerless, paralyzed, bereft of his senses, and almost reduced to idiocy, so that, for the time being, he might as well be without limbs and without faculties as to have them. It is said that even the hair of the head will turn gray, in five minutes, under the boiling bleachery of a paroxysm of fear. There have been many cases where

adults, — men whose minds had acquired some constancy and firmness, — have been made fools for life by sudden fright, — annulled at once, their brains turned into ashes by its consuming fires. And if such are the consequences of intense fear in grown men, what must be the effect upon the delicate texture of a child's brain, when, with weapon in hand, a brawny, whiskered madman flies at the object of his wrath, as a fierce kite pounces upon a timorous dove? Yet who of us that has reached middle age has not seen these atrocities committed against children, again and again?

Another consideration, showing punishment to be a very great evil, is, that the fear of bodily pain, which it proposes, makes the character pusillanimous and ignoble. Children should be trained to a disregard, and even a contempt, of bodily pain; so that they may not be unnerved and unmanned at the very exigencies, when, in after-life, fortitude and intrepidity become indispensable to the performance of duty. Some foolishly-tender parents commit a great mistake when they fuss and flurry, and gather the whole household around, at every little rub or scratch received by a child; and bring out their apparatus of lint and liniment, — enough for the surgeon of a man-of-war, in a naval engagement. Sensitiveness to bodily pain should be discountenanced, because it impairs manliness and steadfastness of character. Children should be taught that corporal suffering, and imprisonment, and death itself, are nothing, compared with loyalty to truth and the Godlike excellence of well-doing, so that when they become men they will be able to march, with unfaltering step, to the post of duty, though their path is enfiladed by a hundred batteries. But keeping the idea of bodily pain forever present to a child's mind counterworks this result. Indeed, a child who is whipped much

will inevitably be driven into one or the other of two ruinous extremes. Which of the extremes it shall be, will depend upon the feebleness or the vigor of his natural disposition. If constitutionally of a timid and irresolute character, then frequent correction will excite his cautiousness to such a morbid activity that his cheek will blanch and his heart quail at the slightest menace of real dangers, or the imagination of unreal ones; and he will go through life trembling with causeless apprehensions, and incapable of recovering from one shudder of fear before he will be seized by another; — incapable of all manly resolution and heroism. If, on the other hand, the child has an energetic will, the very vehemence of which prompts to disobedience and waywardness, then frequency of chastisement will exasperate his nature, and make him recklessly bold and fool-hardy. It will make him despise the gentleness that belongs to a noble spirit, and mistake ferocity for courage. Now, what requital can any teacher make, which shall be an adequate compensation to a child for causing his dispositions to grow into a deformity which shall be a torment and a disgrace to him while life lasts? Have you never seen an aged tree whose trunk still bore the mark where some heedless man had struck his axe while it was yet young, and have you not observed that, on the wounded side of the tree, the foliage was sickly and the branches scraggy and misshapen, while a superabundance of nutriment sent up on the other side had made the limbs shoot out into huge disproportions? Such wounds are inflicted by unnecessary punishment, upon the whole moral nature of a child.

But there is another consideration, of still more serious import. A teacher's duty is by no means restricted to the mere communication of knowledge. He is to superintend the growth of his pupils' minds. These minds con-

sist of various powers and faculties, by which they are adapted to the various necessities, relations and duties of life. Some of them were given us for self-preservation. The object of these is, ourselves, — our own existence, our own sustenance, our own exemption from pain, and protection against danger and loss ; — in fine, our personal well-being. Other powers are domestic and social in their nature, — such as the reciprocal love of parents and children ; the celestial zone of affection that binds brothers and sisters into one ; and our attachment to friends, which, under proper cultivation, enlarges into fraternal affection for the race. We also have moral and religious sentiments, which may be exalted into a solemn feeling of duty towards man and towards God. Now, it is a most responsible part of the teacher's duty to superintend the growth of these manifold powers, and to develop them symmetrically and harmoniously ; to repress some, to cherish others, and to fashion the whole into beauty and loveliness as they grow. A child should be saved from being so selfish as to disregard the rights of others, or, on the other hand, from being a spendthrift of his own. He should be saved from being so proud as to disdain the world, or so vain as to go through the world beseeching everybody to praise and flatter him. He should be guarded alike against being so devoted to his own family as to be deaf and dead to all social claims ; and against being so quixotically social as to run to the ends of the earth, to bestow the bounty, for which his own family and neighborhood are suffering. In fine, the teacher, as far as possible, is so to educate the child, that when he becomes a man, all his various faculties shall have a relative and proportionate activity and vigor, instead of his being nervously excitable on one side of his nature, and palsy-stricken on the other. This task is most

difficult, and it requires that all the lights possible should shine upon the work. It is very easy to point out deformities of character, as they exhibit themselves glaringly and hideously in manhood; but it requires great perspicacity to detect the early tendencies to deformity, and the utmost delicacy and felicity of touch to correct them. If a full-grown tree is ugly or misshapen, anybody can see it, but it is only the skilful cultivator who can foretell and forestall its irregular tendencies while it is yet young. It is this duty which makes the office of a teacher a sacred office. The teaching of A, B, C. and the multiplication-table, has no quality of sacredness in it; but if there is a sacred service, a holy ministry upon earth, it is that of setting a just bound to the animal appetites and sensual propensities of our nature, and quickening into life, and fostering into strength, all benevolent and devout affections; for it is by the relative proportions between these parts of its nature, that the child becomes angel-like or fiend-like. Now, that the teacher may cherish what grows too slow, and check what grows too fast, it is indispensable that he should become acquainted with the inmost character and tendencies of his pupil. The pupil's whole mind and heart should be spread out, like a map, before the teacher for his inspection. The teacher should be able to examine this map, to survey it on all sides and at any time,—as you see a connoisseur walk round a beautiful statue or edifice, that he may commit all its proportions to memory. And here comes the evil I refer to. The moment a child's mind is strongly affected by fear, it flies instinctively away and hides itself in the deepest recesses it can find,—often in the recesses of dissimulation and peridy and falsehood. Instead of exhibiting to you his whole consciousness, he conceals from you as much of it as he can; or

he deceptively presents to you some counterfeit of it, instead of the genuine. No frightened water-fowl, whose plumage the bullet of the sportsman has just grazed, dives quicker beneath the surface, than a child's spirit darts from your eye when you have filled it with the sentiment of fear. And your communication with that child's heart is at an end;—on whatever side you approach him, he watches you and flies, and keeps an impassable distance between you and himself, until friendly relations are re-established between you. His body may be before you, but not his soul; or, if his soul ventures to peep from its hiding-place, it is only in some masquerade dress of deception, which he supposes may avert your anger. So long as this relation continues, whatever you do to him, you do in the dark. As he has ceased to show you what he is, you cannot know what he needs, and what will best befit his condition. When was there ever painter or sculptor so skilful, that he could paint or chisel without *seeing* the canvas or the marble on which he wrought? And when was ever a teacher so omniscient, that he could cultivate habits and character aright, unless he was admitted from day to day to see those thoughts and emotions of the child, whose long indulgence will result in the habits and character of the man?

A child should always be encouraged to make known all his doubts and difficulties, both of an intellectual and of a moral character; and, if won to you by confidence, instead of being banished from you by fear, he will generally do so. If a learner does not state his doubt or difficulty at the time he feels it, the season will pass by, perhaps never to return. And certainly no other time can be so favorable for acquiring correct information, or for solving a doubt, as the time when the desire or the doubt arises in the mind. Yet, if a pupil fears even



a rebuke or a frown, he will allow the proper occasions to pass by, at the hazard of remaining ignorant forever.

Are not these considerations sufficient to show that punishment, — I mean more particularly, corporal punishment, — and the fear which punishment proposes, constitute a great evil? Yet great as the evil is, I admit that it is less than the evil of insubordination or disobedience. It is better, therefore, to tolerate punishment, in cases where the teacher has no other resource, than to suffer insubordination or disobedience in our schools. Yet how infinitely better, to secure order and proficiency, by the power of conscience and the love of knowledge; — to supersede the necessity of violence by moral means. This is already done in a considerable number of schools; I trust it is done, with regard to some scholars, in every school; — that is, I trust there are at least some scholars in every school in the Commonwealth who never know the degradation of the lash. I trust there is no teacher, with such a *vacuum* of good qualities and such a *plenum* of bad ones, as to create the necessity for indiscriminate and universal flogging. — What, then, ought teachers to do? I answer, they should aim to reach those higher and higher points of qualification, which shall enable them to dispense more and more with the necessity of punishment. — If there is any teacher so low in the scale of fitness or competency as to feel obliged to punish every day, he should strive to prolong the interval to once a week. If any teacher punishes but once a quarter, he should strive to punish but once a year. If any one disgraces himself and human nature by punishing fifty per cent of his pupils, he should either leave the school, or make a most liberal discount from such an intolerable percentage. If any one punishes ten per cent of his pupils, he should strive to reduce the number to five, to

three, to one per cent, — and then, if possible, to none at all. If there are five per cent of our teachers who now keep school without punishment, this number should be increased, as fast as possible, to ten per cent, to thirty, to sixty, to ninety per cent.\* That the necessity of punishment, so vehemently urged by some teachers, — and which is urged most vehemently by those who punish most, — is found, when analyzed, to be a necessity that arises from a want of competency, or fitness, in the teacher himself, rather than from any perversity or ungovernableness in the scholars, is demonstrable from this fact; — that certain teachers find it necessary to punish their pupils abundantly, but, on leaving the schools, and being succeeded by competent persons, the necessity of punishment vanishes, — the same schools being governed without it. Instances have occurred where a teacher who could not govern without punishment, has been followed, through successive schools, by one who could, — thus proving that the alleged necessity of punishment belonged to the teacher and not to the schools. Many a teacher has been turned out of school, because he could not govern without punishment, nor even with it; and has been succeeded, the next week, by one who found no occasion to use it, — thus affording demonstrative evidence, that the necessity of punishment, in those cases, was not in human nature, but only in the nature of Mr. A. B. Such is the result to be aimed at, longed for,

\* There are now (1845) at least ten to one of our teachers, as compared with the number in 1839 (when this lecture was written), who keep school without corporal punishment. And in ninety-nine towns in every hundred, in the State, the flogging of girls, even where it exists at all, is an exceedingly rare event. Since 1837, the number of schools in the State, annually broken up through the incompetency of the teachers, or the insubordination of the scholars, has been reduced from between three and four hundred, to about fifty.

toiled for, by all. In the mean time, I blame no teacher for occasional punishment, nor even for occasional corporal punishment. But what seems to me utterly unjustifiable, is, the defence of punishment, as though it were a good ; or the palliation of it, as though it were not a great evil. What seems to me worthy of condemnation, is, a resort to punishment, because it may seem to be a more summary and convenient method of securing obedience and diligence than such a preparation for lessons on the part of the teacher, as would make them attractive to the pupil ; and such exhibitions of kindness and interest, as would win the affection of a child, and make him a grateful co-operator, instead of a toiling slave. An hour spent daily, by the teacher, in the preparation of lessons, an anecdote, a narrative, an illustrative picture, would be a far more powerful awakener of dormant or sluggish minds, than the rod. A private interview with a neglectful or disorderly pupil, a visit to his family, some little attention or gratuity bestowed upon him, — any mode, in fine, of evincing a genuine interest in his welfare, — would oftentimes accomplish what it is not in the power of blows to do. “By *mercy* and *truth*, iniquity is purged,” says Solomon ; “and by the fear of the Lord,” — not by the fear of man, — “men depart from evil.”

As the profession of teaching rises in the estimation of the public, and as teachers improve in their capacities and disposition to fulfil the sacred duties of their office, may we not hope for a gradual change in our schools, in this respect, equally auspicious to them and to society ? And may we not expect that those teachers who enjoy the most of social consideration and of emolument will take the lead in diffusing a higher spirit and in setting a nobler example ?

Allow me here to say a word respecting a notion which

I sometimes hear advocated, but which seems to me untenable. As an argument against corporal punishment, it is sometimes urged, that it makes the body a vicarious and involuntary sufferer for the offences of the mind. It is the mind, say these metaphysicians, which wills, which offends; and to punish the body for the offences of the mind, is as unjust as to punish John for the sins of Peter. But, if it is the mind which offends, in the guilty act, is it not also the mind which suffers, in the consequent penalty? Take away the mind,—that is, leave the body a corpse, and would its dead members then suffer? I confess, I cannot fathom the philosophy of this objection. There is, however, one way in which it can be answered, even on the principles which it assumes. If body and mind are to be considered as two, so as to exempt the former from suffering for the offences of the latter;—even then, though the mind may be the original offender, yet the body becomes a *particeps criminis*,—a partaker in the crime,—by consenting to carry the criminal purpose of the mind into execution; and it may therefore be lawfully punished *as an accessory after the fact*.

As to modes of punishment, not much needs be said, for the savageness of torture formerly practised in our schools is now nearly discontinued, though it is still retained to a frightful extent in many families. When I was at the bar, I knew a father, who was a blacksmith by trade, and who used to punish his son by confining him in the cellar and carrying down heated nail-rods with which to punch and goad him. Before the boy was fifteen years old, he was tried for a capital offence. I was assigned by the court as his counsel. He was convicted and sentenced to death, though the penalty was commuted to imprisonment, in the state-prison, for life. Such a fate was the natural result of such an education. If one or the other must

have gone to the gallows, who can doubt that it should have been the father, and not the son? When an angry man chastises a child, it is not punishment; it is downright fighting, and so much the more criminal and disgraceful, as the person assailed is a child, and not a man.

Blows should never be inflicted on the head. We observe, every day, how thin the skull of an infant is. We can see the pulse beat, on the top of its head. The cranium does not ordinarily become fixed in its shape, until the age of twenty-five years, — sometimes, not until a much later period of life. Dr. Griscom, in his excellent work, entitled “Animal Mechanism,” says, “a vibration of the skull, by communicating a corresponding motion to the brain, is more dangerous oftentimes than an instrument forced through the bones and piercing the substance of the brain.” And again; “Concussion of the brain is generally more productive of immediate serious results, than a puncture of its substance. It is well known, in fact, that a considerable portion of it [the brain] may be removed or destroyed, without proving fatal, or even injuring the mental faculties; but a sudden jar of its whole substance will almost certainly deprive the individual of all sense and consciousness, and, if not speedily recovered from, must terminate in death.” This form of punishment, too, is as foolish as it is dangerous. To thwack a child over the head because he does not get his lesson, is about as wise as it would be to rap a watch with a hammer because it does not keep good time. No one, could he but see the delicate texture of the brain, — that organ where the Deity has brought the material and the immaterial, the earthly and the immortal substances together, making each atom of the former so nice, so ethereal, so divinely-fashioned, and suspending

all, as it were, particle by particle, in the "Dome of Thought," so that they might leap, with lightning quickness, at the command of the all-pervading yet invisible soul;—no one, I say, who has ever seen this, if he be not a madman or a fool, will ever again strike a child upon the head. I have no doubt that the intellects of thousands of children have been impaired for life, by the blows which some angry parent or teacher has inflicted upon the head. Nature, foreseeing that the brain would be exposed to accidents, secured it, on all sides, by the hard bones of the cranium; and, to conceal any ruggedness in the solid masonry, she caused a silky vegetation to spring up from and adorn it. Had she foreseen how brutally it would be assaulted by men, would she not rather have encircled it with a spherical iron-fender, or made it bristle, all over, with porcupine's quills, to give it a defence instead of an ornament? Even in the British army and navy, where whipping has been, for frequency, like their daily bread, certain parts of the frame, such as the head and loins, have been held sacred from the instruments of torture.

Neither should a child ever be subjected to any violent motion or concussion, such as seizing him by the arm, holding him out at arm's-length, and shaking him,—the whole weight of the body being suspended by a single ligament, and the strain upon that being greatly increased by the jerking. Most of us have experienced the shock which even a slight fall may give to the system. When, in descending a flight of steps, we mistakingly suppose we have reached the bottom, and so step forward upon the air, instead of the floor, the jar to the whole body is always uncomfortable, and sometimes serious; but how much more severe must be the effect upon the feebly-knitted frame of a child, when a strong man seizes him,

and jerks him forwards and backwards, as a coachman cracks a whip ; and then dashes him upon the floor, feet foremost, shortening his dimensions, as one shuts up a telescope ; and coils him and uncoils him, and crimps him and stretches him smooth again ! I have seen a man seize two boys, at a time, in school, for some joint misdemeanor, and, holding them by the back of the coat-collar, make them "*chassée*" right and left, then "*forward and back two*," and, at last, bring them together with a terrific "*dos-à-dos*," until his own strength or the tailor's stitching gave way ; and do it all with as much zest as though it were an exercise in gymnastics.

— Corporal punishment should be with a rod, rather than with a ferrule, and below the loins or upon the legs, rather than upon the body or hand. —

In regard to the extent or severity of punishment, it is obvious that it must be a reality, and not a sham. If the lightning never struck, nobody would be afraid of the thunder. Yet the opposite extreme is to be sedulously guarded against. In all schools that are rightly governed, it is the mortification of being punished, quite as much as the bodily smart or tingling, which causes it to be deprecated, and gives it efficacy. If the common standard or average of punishment is fixed low, whatever exceeds that amount will be equally as formidable as though the average were higher. Besides, if the penalty for moderate offences be very severe, what shall be done in aggravated cases ? Where stealing a shilling is punishable with death, and murder with nothing more, it is, virtually, offering a premium on murder. The most disorderly school I ever saw, was one where the teacher carried a rattan in his hand all the time ; and even while the company was present, there was scarcely any thing done, except giving a practical synopsis of the verb *to whip*. A

universality of whipping defeats itself. Where all share the same odious fortune, disgrace attaches to none. Like the inhabitants of Botany Bay, all being rogues, nobody loses caste. Shame never belongs to multitudes. It is the separation of one or a few from all others, and affixing a stigma upon them, that begets shame.

In graduating the amount of punishment, we should regard the motive from which the offence proceeded, and not the consequences which may have been produced by it. In the government of children, people are prone to look at the outward, external consequences of the wrongful act, and to apportion the punishment according to the mischief done;—for a small mischief punishing lightly, for a serious one, severely. This is a false criterion. An act merely careless may set a house on fire; and again, an attempt to burn a house may fail, through the merest accident, and do no injury. The true rule, in meting out punishment, is, to disregard the external consequences, to look to the intention and motive from which the offence emanated, and to apportion the penalty to the wickedness of the intent, whether it took effect or failed. It is the condition of the mind that is to be regarded. If that is wrong, all is wrong; if that is right, it is of comparatively little consequence what outward effects may have followed. Teach children, that to die is but a small calamity; to be depraved, a great one.

One word more as to the extent or amount of punishment. Severe punishments are usually incurred by the violent outbreak of some passion or propensity. A child has a quarrelsome disposition, and beats a schoolmate; or he has been accustomed to place all pleasure in the indulgence of appetite, and steals fruit or cakes; or he wishes to conceal a fault, and lies. In these cases, he acts under the impulse of an appetite or propensity, and



these impulses are all blind. They act instinctively. Remove the temptation, in these cases, — that is, let the desired object be attainable without the commission of the offence, — and the offence would not be committed. The offence is not committed for its own sake, but for the sake of the gratification or immunity to be purchased by it. Now, I have no doubt, that when the temptation is not present, the reason and conscience of most children tell them plainly enough that the indulgence is wrong. When the passions are asleep, reason and conscience affirm their own authority, declare their own rights, and place themselves in an attitude of defence. But, by and by, the insurgent passion returns and demands its gratification; and when reason and conscience place themselves in its path, it rides them down, as heavy-armed cavalry ride over unarmed peasantry. In these cases, reason and conscience are the antagonists of passion; but they are not a match for it, and are trodden down by it. Here, if all other means fail, punishment, that is, the fear of punishment, may be lawfully called in, as an ally to duty, so that the child's first thought shall be this: — However much I desire such or such a pleasure, I must incur so much pain by obtaining it, that, on the whole, it is not worth what it will cost. Such is the case in ten thousand minds, whether of children or of men, — Fear fighting Desire; — and here the fear, — that is, the amount of punishment exciting the fear, — should be strong enough, with such aid as reason and conscience may contribute, to vanquish the desire. This affords a rule for the measure of punishment. All beyond this is wantonness or vindictiveness, and not to be tolerated. To illustrate what I mean, by an anecdote: Just as a certain school was closing, one afternoon, a boy named John, who had become almost crazy with impatience, and

in whom the steam of discontent had risen almost to the exploding point, *whistled* outright. "John," said the teacher, "was it you who whistled?" "No, sir," says John. "Henry," says the teacher, "didn't John whistle?" "Yes, sir," says Henry. "John," says the teacher, "how dare you say you did not whistle?" "I didn't," says John, "*it whistled itself.*" Now, in this case, if John were to be punished at all, he should only be punished so much that it would not whistle itself, the next time.

As to the question, under what circumstances punishment should be inflicted, I think, in the first place, it should, in ordinary cases, be private, — at recess, or in another apartment, or after the close of the school. Punishment is often braved by audacious natures, and its effect lost upon them by its publicity. They wish to sustain, or to win a reputation for hardiness and indomitableness of spirit, and hence they will bear any punishment, if publicly inflicted, without shrinking or flinching; — just as an Indian sings when he is tortured, or as some steel-fibred malefactors walk unconcernedly up the gallows' ladder, as though they were going up stairs to bed. So far as the effect upon other pupils is concerned, it is obvious that their imaginations will be likely to exaggerate an unknown punishment beyond the reality, unless, indeed, it be terribly severe. Under actual inspection, punishment would have its limits of suffering; but imagination has no limits.

Punishment should never be inflicted without deep solemnity of manner. The teacher should exhibit every indication that he suffers more pain in giving, than its object does in receiving it. Because grown persons are out of the way of punishment, they are prone to think of it lightly, to speak of it lightly, and to inflict it lightly.

But it is a solemn dispensation, and should be treated with corresponding solemnity. I believe a finely-tempered child suffers as much, by being kept from his playmates after school, to be punished, as a high-spirited man would suffer, in being taken to prison from family and friends. How obvious then it is, that punishment should never be inflicted in a passion, — unless, indeed, it be a passion of tears. Angry feelings in a teacher beget angry feelings in a pupil, and if these are repeated, day after day, they will at last rise to obstinacy, to obduracy and incorrigibility. No man can conceive the difference which must be produced in the future character and happiness of children, and eventually upon the future character and happiness of the whole community, if, on the one hand, the early years of life are filled with dissocial, morose and revengeful feelings, or, on the other, with sentiments of tenderness and affection. I will not cite the case of barbarous tribes, because they are an extreme; but whence did the old Romans derive their inexorableness and impenetrability of heart? They rose to the highest state of ancient civilization, and yet their national employment was war; their national resources were plunder, and their national glory consisted in unrighteous victories, won over unoffending nations. Under such influences, their hearts became more impenetrable than the iron mail that covered them. In their religion, Mars received ten times more homage than Jupiter. They prayed and sacrificed to the latter, just enough to retain his good will, but the former was the god of their affections. This intense destructiveness in the national character was cultivated by their exhibitions of fighting wild beasts, and their gladiatorial contests. One of these spectacles lasted more than four months; eleven thousand animals of different kinds were killed, and ten thousand

gladiators fought. Think of a people who could give the appellation of "*Games*" to these blood-reeking abominations. Every person who manifests cruelty or anger before the young, does all he can to fashion their unformed tempers into this revolting and unchristian shape.

Is not the British nation celebrated, the world over, for the aggressive spirit of its policy, and, with many beautiful exceptions, for the unamiable character of its people; and is it not in the schools of Great Britain that punishments are more frequent and more severe than in any other part of Christendom? I know it is said that this severity in the discipline of children is accompanied by great hardihood of spirit and by distinguished martial bravery in men. Look into British factories and British mines, and see by what else it is accompanied!

Punishment should not be inflicted in haste, nor summarily. It should bear every mark of consideration, and of being administered from the moral compulsion of duty. Its effects pervade the whole moral nature of a child. By its application, the disease may not be cured, but only driven in, to break out with increased violence at another time, or in another place. The times when a punished child is dismissed or sent back to his seat are among the most decisive epochs in his moral history. Often, they are turning-points in the journey of life, where, for good, or for evil, he leaves one path and enters upon another; and though, at first, their divergency may be slight, yet their terminations may be as far asunder as the upper from the nether world. Hence the necessity of learning the condition of his feelings at those times, in order to rectify whatever may be wrong in them. I confess that I have been amazed and overwhelmed, to see a teacher spend an hour at the black-board, explaining arithmetical questions, and another hour on the reading or gram-

mar lessons ; and, in the mean time, as though it were only some interlude, seize a boy by the collar, drag him to the floor, castigate him, and remand him to his seat, — the whole process not occupying two minutes. Such laborious processes for the intellect, such summary dealings with the heart ; — with that part of us, where all motives reside, whence all actions proceed, and which shall grow in loftiness, until we become, in moral stature, taller than archangels, or arch-fiends ! But, says the teacher, in defence of his *extempore* inflictions, I have no time for your homilies and moralizings. I should come short of my daily round of tasks, I must skip or clip my recitations, did I spend time to inquire whether the child thought himself wronged or justly dealt by ; whether he would look backward upon the occasion with repentance, or forward with revenge ; whether conscience were alive or dead in his breast. But, for man's sake and for Heaven's sake, let me ask, what was time made for, if not for these moral uses ? — To what holier purpose can time be appropriated, than, when a child gets lost in error, to set his face towards the right point of the moral compass before he is started off again ? The glass of time contains no sands more sacred than those which run during these precious moments. When I look back to the playmates of my childhood ; when I remember the acquaintance which I formed with nine college classes ; when I cast my eye over the circles of men with whom professional and public duties made me conversant ; I find amongst all these examples, that, for one man who has been ruined for want of intellect or attainment, hundreds have perished for want of morals. And yet, with this disproportion between the causes of human ruin, we go on, bestowing at least a hundred times more care and pains and cost in the education of the intellect, than in the cultivation of the

moral sentiments, and in the establishment of moral principles. From year to year, we pursue the same course of navigation, with all these treasure-laden vessels going down to destruction around us and before us, when, if the ocean in which they are sunk were not fathomless and bottomless, the wrecks, ere this, would have filled it solid to the surface.

Let me adjure teachers to reconsider this whole subject; to apportion anew the appeals to the physical and to the moral nature of children; and, if the practice anywhere still exists of punishing by sections or platoons, without inquiry and without counsel, to abolish it, instantaneously and forever.

— A child may surrender to fear, without surrendering to principle. — But it is the surrender to principle only which has any permanent value. — The surrender of a child to fear, is like a surrender of our purse to a highwayman, whom, that very instant, we would shoot if we could. Hence, after the outward demonstrations of the inward evil have been repressed, let not teacher or parent think that his labor is done. It is only begun. In a moral sense, the child is still a valetudinarian. Often, the very process which quells the rage of the disease, weakens the constitution of the patient, and special pains become so much the more necessary to re-establish health. Let the cordial of love and consolation be administered to the wounded spirit. This is often the most delicate, always the most important part of the process. I had almost said, better die of the disease than to expel it by remedies, which, proving fatal to the constitution, entail a daily torture upon all subsequent life. The external manifestation, — the overt acts, — of a passion, may be stifled, while the passion itself lives on, and broods over its viper-offspring in the silent breast. Instead of a solemn re-

solve against further indulgence, it may be nursing its strength in secrecy for a postponed gratification. It may have withdrawn from outward view, but be lying in ambush, and watching the hour when it can securely leap upon its victim. Now, no fury of external outbreak is so much to be dreaded and deprecated as these silent machinations, or foretastes of revenge. It is, therefore, no paradox to say, that order and silence and regularity may be maintained, in a school, by a course of discipline, which, while it seems to make a good school, shall, in reality, be a skilfully arranged process for making bad men. The feelings, with which the child leaves the bar and the tribunal,—the course which is given to his future feelings by the executions of the sentence;—this, as it regards the moral welfare of the child, is the whole;—all else is as nothing, compared with it. His moral nature has been fused in the fires of shame and pain, and the question is, in what shapes, of good or of evil, it shall harden as it cools. Everybody is familiar with the story of Dr. Bowditch, who came near to being inhumanly punished for an alleged falsehood, because he said he had solved an arithmetical question, whose solution required more talent than his tyrannical master supposed him to possess. Late in life, that great man spoke of the event in a manner which showed that, after the lapse of half a century, the feeling of righteous indignation towards the teacher was still vivid in his breast. How often do we meet men, who never speak of some former teacher of theirs, without a contraction of the whole muscular system;—without such involuntary motions as would indicate that they were crushing a viper in their hands, and had the head of a serpent under their heel! Punishment inflicted by such teachers may have prevented whispering in school, but at the expense of a thousand

uttered curses afterwards. Those whose art it is to color circles have a time and a process for what they call *setting the color*. The hour of punishment is the time, when, perhaps more than at any other time, the complexion of the moral character is set;—and oh! how often it is dyed to that hue of immitigable blackness, which can neither be purged nor washed away by the reformer's fire or the father's soap!

If ~~any~~ feelings survive punishment they can rarely be concealed from a discerning eye. They will be betrayed by the look and especially by the tones of the voice. The child will not have the same freedom of tone of manner as before, and the same ease of unobtrusive possession. His eye will glow, or sink away, when a master looks at the scholar, if else it will be fixed upon him with a look of defiance. Perhaps he will be even more unobtrusive in the language of silence, as not if the ornaments of the tongue he is unwilling to wear. But his silence will be more full than the great silence. Any of these indications should admonish the teacher that the child would not be wholly as before, but that it needs further training from the spirit of duty to make it virtuous submission. And will not the teacher find it a special time and strength for him to observe that if he can effect a thorough reformation by a change of view as to the perfection of a new purpose, it will probably be a reformation more for all—a reformation not to be despised if

In the management of children we shall recognize the necessity and propriety of being more particularly firm, stern, and punishing, and will seriously reflect if expending the same amount of time and means for improving the proper characterizing notions. The teacher's strength of any one faculty is certainly reduced by



increasing the strength of its antagonist faculties, as by reducing its own. Remove by introducing. Nourish the good plant, until it overshadows the bad one, and intercepts its sunshine and absorbs its nutriment. One of the most efficient means of that revolution which has lately taken place, in the cure of the insane, consists in the substitution of new trains of thoughts and feelings, until the former ones die out. While the old physicians strove to expel the currents of insane thought and emotion, by scourgings, and drownings, and confinements in dungeons, they tried and tortured in vain. They only aggravated the maladies they were appointed to heal. But from the day that they began to open new sources of thought and feeling in the minds of their patients, — from that day, a power to cast out the evil spirits of insanity was given them. So, in the training of a child, it is possible to supplant vicious images and vicious desires, by substituting virtuous images and virtuous desires; but it is not possible to create a void by merely removing the vicious ones.

Another rule is to be observed in administering all rebukes and all punishments. Always connect the rebuke or the punishment with the wrong that incurs it, and not with the correlative right. Keep the idea of the offence before the child's mind, as the cause of his suffering. If you correct a boy for not coming to school half an hour earlier, he wishes the school was in the Red Sea, because, by the law of mental association, the punishment is involuntarily connected with the school. But correct him for truancy, in stopping to play at marbles, and the next time he is tempted to stop and play, the very sight of the marbles, by the law of association, will make his skin itch and tingle. If a boy is convicted of falsehood, and the teacher, as he lays on the smart, says, "I'll teach you

how to speak the truth," the boy will hate the very idea of truth, for the bad company it comes in. But if the teacher, in administering the penalty, explains that falsehood and punishment are Siamese twins, and must go together, then, when falsehood comes smiling and blandishing along to tempt its victim again, he will see the terrific form of pain standing by its side. Thus the association of pain should always be connected with the wrong done, and never with the duty omitted. It thus becomes unconsciously an auxiliary for the right. So, on the other hand, the rewards of virtue should be always associated with the virtuous conduct, as though the former grew naturally from the latter. Every person, at all conversant with the forum or the senate, knows that one of the great secrets of an orator's power consists in his skilful management of the involuntary associations. If this is an efficient instrument in swaying the minds of men, how much more so in controlling children!

I cannot close these remarks, without saying a word upon the general duty of parents whose children are punished at school. That duty is to espouse the side of the teacher, to vindicate his conduct, and, especially, to abstain from all complaint against him in any place where it may come to the child's ear. They should have an interview with the child himself on the subject; they should explain the nature of the misconduct that incurred the punishment, and they should show them that they, the parents, suffer shame and mortification, on his account, sharper than any pain of chastisement can be. They should strive to close any breach of alienation between pupil and teacher, which the punishment may have caused. If the parent has reason to suppose that the punishment was too severe, or that the mode or spirit of inflicting it was improper, let him seek a private interview

with the teacher, frankly state his apprehensions, and then, like an honest and impartial man, hearken to the defence that may be made. The punishment of children at school furnishes the very occasions when that love of offspring, which Heaven, for the wisest purposes, has planted in every parental breast, is liable to become injurious and excessive; and when, therefore, it most needs the control of reason. Only in cases made flagrant by their excess, or their frequency, should the conduct of the teacher receive *public* animadversion.

I knew a family, in which there were five children, who received almost all the education they ever had, in the district school of an obscure country town. It was the father's custom, during the first week of the winter's school, to invite the master to dine with him; and when the whole family were gathered around the table, to make the importance of the school, the necessity of good order and obedience in it, with other kindred topics, the subject of conversation; and then, in the presence of the children, to say, as it were incidentally, that he trusted they would all behave well; that they knew no desire was so near his heart as their welfare; but that, if they justly incurred any punishment at school, he should repeat it at home, because he should consider an offence committed in school as an offence against himself, as well as against the teacher. One of the sons, — a boy of such high, sanguineous temperament that his feelings were subject to a sort of spontaneous combustion, — one day drew down punishment upon himself for a practical joke, — which, if the wit of it had been an atonement, instead of an aggravation, would have been expiated in the commission; — and the fact being known at home, by the very solemnity of the children's looks, the father inquired into the circumstances, and, finding the punishment to have

been well merited, that very night he laid upon the boy's back what the learned would call a *fac-simile*, or *duplicate original*, of the stripes ; and there ended the chapter of school punishments, in that family, forever. Not another child, ever afterwards, got sting or tingle at school ; and this, happening in the old-fashioned times, when the mischievous system of emulation bore sway, the children of that family, year after year, swept away all the prizes, and nobody ever thought of asking who were at the heads of the classes.

I would conclude with this summary of what has been said : — that, in the present state of society, and with our present inexperienced and untrained corps of teachers, punishment, and even corporal punishment, cannot be dispensed with, by all teachers, in all schools, and with regard to all scholars ; that, where a school is well conducted, the minimum of punishment shows the maximum of qualifications ; that the office of punishment is solely to restrain transgressors, until other and higher motives can be brought to bear upon them, and, therefore, that the great and paramount duty of the teacher, in all cases, is to regard, as all-essential, the state of mind into which a child is brought by the punishment, and in which he is left after it, — the current of thought and feeling introduced being in every respect as important as that which is turned away ; that, as the object of school is to prepare for the duties of after-life, it follows that the school is made for the world, and not the world for the school ; and hence, however much any course may seem to promote the present good appearance or intellectual advancement of the school, yet, if it tends to defeat the welfare of the future men and women, now composing the school, its adoption is shortsighted and suicidal ; and finally, that punishment of no kind is ever inflicted in the right spirit,

or is likely to be inflicted in the right measure, or with the right results, unless it is as painful to him who imposes as to him who receives it. Let these truths be regarded, and Christian teachers and parents, in the few cases in which they will be called upon to administer pain, will do it with the noble feelings that animated the pagan executioner, who gave, as he was commanded, the cup of poison to Socrates, but wept as he gave it.

“ Oh, woe to those who trample on the mind,  
That deathless thing ! They know not what they do,  
Nor what they deal with. Man, perchance, may bind  
The flower his step hath bruised ; or light anew  
The torch he quenches ; or to music wind  
Again the lyre-string from his touch that flew ; —  
But for the soul, oh, tremble, and beware  
To lay rude hands upon God’s mysteries there ! ”

**FIRST ANNUAL REPORT**  
**OF THE**  
**BOARD OF EDUCATION.**  
**1838.**



**FIRST ANNUAL REPORT**  
**OF THE**  
**BOARD OF EDUCATION.**

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*The Board of Education, created by an act of the Legislature, approved 20th April, 1837, ask permission to submit their First Annual Report.*

THE Board held its first meeting in the Council Chamber in Boston, on the 29th June, 1837. Authority having been given, by the law creating the Board, to appoint a Secretary, the Honorable Horace Mann, late President of the Senate of the Commonwealth, was elected by ballot to that office. It being provided that the Secretary should receive a reasonable compensation for his services, not exceeding one thousand dollars per annum, it was unanimously agreed by the Board, that this sum should be allowed as his salary; it being understood that he should devote himself exclusively to the duties of his office. On this subject, the Board will ask permission to make a few observations in the sequel of their report.

The duties of the Board, as prescribed by the statute, are, 1st, to prepare and lay before the Legislature, in a printed form, on or before the second Wednesday in January, annually, an abstract of the school returns received by the Secretary of the Commonwealth, and 2d, to make a detailed report to the Legislature of all their doings,





in this co-operation  
in the medium of  
the Commonwealth,  
committee-men, and  
drawn from the sev-

The conventions  
were held successively at  
various dates, in order that  
each might be given  
the purpose of the  
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present; and this,  
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of school educa-

with such observations as their experience and reflection may suggest, upon the condition and efficiency of our system of popular education, and the most practicable means of improving and extending it.

The first duty has been discharged. The Board at an early day confided to their Secretary the duty of preparing an abstract of the school returns. This abstract has been duly submitted to the Legislature, in a highly convenient form. The recapitulation at its close, supersedes the necessity of presenting in this place any summary of its contents. Imperfect as such a document must necessarily be, it comprises a great amount of valuable information. The Board are of opinion, that, by such improvements as experience may suggest, it will be in their power,—if authority be granted to them,—to render it still more instructive and useful. It is respectfully recommended, that power be granted to the Board, by the Legislature, to direct such amendments in the mode and time of making the returns, and in the mode of keeping the school-register, as will more effectually answer the purposes for which the returns are directed to be made.

It is made the duty of the Secretary, “under the direction of the Board, to collect information of the actual condition and efficiency of the common schools and other means of popular education ; and to diffuse as widely as possible, throughout every part of the Commonwealth, information of the most approved and successful methods of arranging the studies and conducting the education of the young.”

The limited powers conferred on the Board left them scarce any discretion in the choice of the means, by which they could enable their Secretary to discharge his duty as thus prescribed. It was necessary to depend almost exclusively on the voluntary co-operation of the people ;

and no way suggested itself in which this co-operation could be given so effectually, as through the medium of conventions, called in each county of the Commonwealth, to be composed of teachers, school-committee-men, and the friends of education generally, deputed from the several towns to attend these conventions. The conventions were so arranged as to time, as to be held successively at convenient intervals throughout the State, in order that the presence of the Secretary of the Board might be given at each county convention. It was the purpose of the Board, that these meetings should also be attended by such members of their own body, as from their place of residence were able conveniently to be present; and this, when other engagements permitted, has been done. In pursuance of these views, an address was issued by the Board to the people of the Commonwealth, a copy of which will be found subjoined to the Report of the Secretary, herewith presented.

By way of preparation for the county conventions, a series of questions was prepared by the Secretary, and widely circulated throughout the Commonwealth, for the purpose of drawing forth and concentrating information on the most important points, connected with the subject of education. A copy of these questions is also subjoined.

At the appointed time, the circuit of the county conventions was commenced by their Secretary, and the Board feel warranted in saying, that his attendance and public addresses at these meetings were productive of the happiest effects. Seconded by an enlightened zeal for the improvement of education, on the part of those by whom these conventions were attended, it is believed that his services and efforts have been highly instrumental in awakening a new interest in the cause of school educa

tion. At the semi-annual meeting of the Board, on the first day of the present month, a detailed REPORT of his proceedings was submitted by the Secretary, with various observations on the leading topics which had engaged his attention, in the discharge of his duty. This document will be found appended to the present report, and the Board refer to it with great satisfaction, as a result of the organization of the Board of Education for the first year of its existence, in the highest degree creditable to its author, and likely to prove equally beneficial to the cause of education and acceptable to the people of the Commonwealth.

It is not the province of the Board of Education to submit to the Legislature, in the form of specific projects of law, those measures, which they may deem advisable for the improvement of the schools and the promotion of the cause of education. That duty is respectfully left by the Board, with the wisdom of the Legislature and its committees, on whom it is by usage devolved. Neither will it be expected of the Board, on the present occasion, to engage in a lengthened discussion of topics, fully treated in their Secretary's report, to which they beg leave to refer, as embodying a great amount of fact, and the result of extensive observation skilfully generalized. The Board ask permission only to submit a few remarks on some of the more important topics connected with the general subject.

1. As the comfort and progress of children at school depend, to a very considerable degree, on the proper and commodious construction of schoolhouses, the Board ask leave to invite the particular attention of the Legislature to their Secretary's remarks on this subject. As a general observation, it is no doubt too true, that the schoolhouses, in most of the districts of the Commonwealth are of an

imperfect construction. It is apprehended that sometimes at less expense than is now incurred, and in other cases, by a small additional expense, schoolhouses much more conducive to the health and comfort, and consequently to the happiness and progress of children, might be erected. Nor would it be necessary, in most cases, in order to introduce the desired improvements, that new buildings should be constructed. Perhaps in a majority of cases, the end might be attained to a considerable degree, by alterations and additions to the present buildings. It is the purpose of the Secretary of the Board, as early as practicable, to prepare and submit a special report on the construction of schoolhouses. When this document shall be laid before them, it will be for the Legislature to judge, whether any encouragement can, with good effect, be offered from the school-fund, with a view to induce the towns of the Commonwealth to adopt those improvements in the construction of schoolhouses, which experience and reason show to be of great practical importance in carrying on the business of education.

2. Very much of the efficiency of the best system of school education depends upon the fidelity and zeal with which the office of a school-committee-man is performed. The Board deem it unnecessary to dilate upon a subject so ably treated by their Secretary. The difficulties to be surmounted before the services of able and faithful school-committee-men can be obtained, in perhaps a majority of the towns of the Commonwealth, are confessedly great and various. They can be thoroughly overcome only by the spirit of true patriotism, generously exerting itself toward the great end of promoting the intellectual improvement of fellow-men. But it is in the power of the Legislature to remove some of the obstacles, among which not the least considerable is the pecuniary sacrifice involved

in the faithful and laborious discharge of the duties of the school committee. The Board have understood, with great satisfaction, that the subject has been brought before the House of Representatives. They know of no reason why the members of school committees should not receive a reasonable compensation, as well as other municipal officers, of whom it is not usually expected that they should serve the public gratuitously. There are none whose labors, faithfully performed, are of greater moment to the general well-being. The duties of a member of a school committee, if conscientiously discharged, are onerous; and ought not to be rendered more so, by being productive of a heavy pecuniary loss, in the wholly unrequited devotion of time and labor to the public good.

3. The subject of the education of teachers has been more than once brought before the Legislature, and is of the very highest importance in connection with the improvement of our schools. That there are all degrees of skill and success on the part of teachers, is matter of too familiar observation to need repetition; and that these must depend, in no small degree, on the experience of the teacher, and in his formation under a good discipline and method of instruction in early life, may be admitted without derogating, in any measure, from the importance of natural gifts and aptitude, in fitting men for this as for the other duties of society. Nor can it be deemed unsafe to insist that, while occupations requiring a very humble degree of intellectual effort and attainment demand a long-continued training, it cannot be that the arduous and manifold duties of the instructor of youth should be as well performed without as with a specific preparation for them. In fact, it must be admitted, as the voice of reason and experience, that institutions for the formation of teachers must be established among us,

before the all-important work of forming the minds of our children can be performed in the best possible manner, and with the greatest attainable success.

No one who has been the witness of the ease and effect with which instruction is imparted by one teacher, and the tedious pains-taking and unsatisfactory progress which mark the labors of another of equal ability and knowledge, and operating on materials equally good, can entertain a doubt that there is a mastery in teaching as in every other art. Nor is it less obvious that, within reasonable limits, this skill and this mastery may themselves be made the subjects of instruction, and be communicated to others.

We are not left to the deductions of reason on this subject. In those foreign countries, where the greatest attention has been paid to the work of education, schools for teachers have formed an important feature in their systems, and with the happiest result. The art of imparting instruction has been found, like every other art, to improve by cultivation in institutions established for that specific object. New importance has been attached to the calling of the instructor by public opinion, from the circumstance that his vocation has been deemed one requiring systematic preparation and culture. Whatever tends to degrade the profession of the teacher, in his own mind or that of the public, of course impairs his usefulness; and this result must follow from regarding instruction as a business which in itself requires no previous training.

The duties which devolve upon the teachers even of our Common Schools, particularly when attended by large numbers of both sexes, and of advanced years for learners (as is often the case), are various, and difficult of performance. For their faithful execution, no degree of



talent and qualification is too great ; and when we reflect that in the nature of things only a moderate portion of both can, in ordinary cases, be expected, for the slender compensation afforded the teacher, we gain a new view of the necessity of bringing to his duties the advantage of previous training in the best mode of discharging them.

A very considerable part of the benefit, which those who attend our schools might derive from them, is unquestionably lost for want of mere skill in the business of instruction, on the part of the teacher. This falls with especial hardship on that part of our youthful population, who are able to enjoy, but for a small portion of the year, the advantage of the schools. For them it is of peculiar importance, that, from the moment of entering the school, every hour should be employed to the greatest advantage, and every facility in imparting knowledge, and every means of awakening and guiding the mind, be put into instant operation : and where this is done, two months of schooling would be as valuable as a year passed under a teacher destitute of experience and skill. The Board cannot but express the sanguine hope, that the time is not far distant, when the resources of public or private liberality will be applied in Massachusetts for the foundation of an institution for the formation of teachers, in which the present existing defect will be amply supplied.

4. The subject of district-school libraries is deemed of very great importance by the Board. A foundation was made for the formation of such libraries, by the Act of 12th April, 1837, authorizing an expenditure by each district of thirty dollars, for this purpose, the first year, and ten each succeeding year. Such economy has been introduced into the business of printing, that even these small sums judiciously applied for a term of years will

amply suffice for the desired object. To the attainment of this end, it is in the power of booksellers and publishers to render the most material aid. There is no reason to doubt, that if neat editions of books suitable for Common-School libraries were published and sold at a very moderate rate, plainly and substantially bound, and placed in cases well adapted for convenient transportation, and afterwards to serve as the permanent place of deposit, it would induce many of the districts in the Commonwealth to exercise the power of raising money for school libraries. A beginning once made, steady progress would in many cases be sure to follow. Where circumstances did not admit the establishment of a library in each district, it might very conveniently be deposited a proportionate part of the year in each district successively. But it would be highly desirable that each school-house should be furnished with a case and shelves, suitable for the proper arrangement and safe-keeping of books. The want of such a provision makes it almost impossible to begin the collection of a library ; and where such provision is made, the library would be nearly sure to receive a steady increase.

Although the Board are of opinion, that nothing would more promote the cause of education among us, than the introduction of libraries into our district schools, they have not deemed it advisable to recommend any measure looking to the preparation of a series of volumes, of which such a library should be composed, and their distribution, at public expense. Whatever advantages would belong to a library consisting of books expressly written for the purpose, obvious difficulties and dangers would attend such an undertaking. The Board deem it far more advisable to leave this work to the enterprise and judgment of publishers, who would, no doubt, find it for

their interest to make preparations to satisfy a demand for district-school libraries in the way above indicated.

In this connection the Board would observe, that much good might unquestionably be effected by the publication of a periodical journal or paper, of which the exclusive object should be to promote the cause of education, especially of Common-School education. Such a journal, conducted on the pure principles of Christian philanthropy, of rigid abstinence from party and sect, sacredly devoted to the one object of education, to collecting and diffusing information on this subject, to the discussion of the numerous important questions which belong to it, to the formation of a sound and intelligent public opinion, and the excitement of a warm and energetic public sentiment, in favor of our schools, might render incalculable service. . . The Board are decidedly of opinion, that a journal of this description would be the most valuable auxiliary which could be devised, to carry into execution the enlightened policy of the government, in legislating for the improvement of the schools, and they indulge a sanguine hope that its establishment will shortly be witnessed.

5. The subject of school-books is perhaps one of more immediate and pressing interest. The multiplicity of school-books, and the imperfection of many of them, is one of the greatest evils at present felt in our Common Schools. The Board know of no way, in which this evil could be more effectually remedied, than by the selection of the best of each class now in use, and a formal recommendation of them by the Board of Education. Such a recommendation would probably cause them to be generally adopted ; but should this not prove effectual, and the evil be found to continue, it might hereafter be deemed expedient to require the use of the books thus

recommended, as a condition of receiving a share of the benefit of the school fund.

The foregoing observations are all that now occur to the Board of Education, as proper to be made to the Legislature, in connection with the improvement of our Common Schools. They beg leave to submit an additional remark on the subject of their own sphere of operations. It is evident, from the nature of the case, that much of the efficiency and usefulness of the Board must depend on the zeal and fidelity of its Secretary, and that it is all-important to command, in this office, the services of an individual of distinguished talent and unquestioned character. No other qualifications will inspire the confidence generally of the people; and without that confidence, it is impossible that his labors or those of the Board should be crowned with success. The Board ask permission to state, that they deem themselves very fortunate in having engaged the services of a gentleman so highly qualified as their Secretary, to discharge the interesting duties of his trust; and they respectfully submit to the Legislature, the expediency of raising his compensation to an amount, which could more fairly be regarded as a satisfactory equivalent for the employment of all his time. The Board also think, that a small allowance should be made for the contingent expenses of the Secretary in the discharge of his duties, such as postage, stationery, and occasional clerk-hire. It is just, however, to add, that this proposal for an increase of salary is made wholly without suggestion on the part of the Secretary.

In conclusion, the Board would tender their acknowledgments to their fellow-citizens, who, by attending on the meetings of the county conventions, or in any other way, have afforded their co-operation in the pro-

motion of the great cause of popular education. At most of these meetings, permanent county conventions for the improvement of education have been organized. Spirited addresses have, in almost every case, emanated from the county meetings, well calculated to impart vigor and warmth to the public sentiment in reference to the cause of education. On the whole, the Board have reason to hope, that an impulse has been given to the public mind on the subject of education, from which valuable effects may be anticipated. It will be their strenuous effort, under the auspices of the Legislature, and as far as the powers vested in them extend, to encourage and augment the interest which has been excited, and they hope, as they shall acquire experience, that their labors will become more efficient. They do not flatter themselves that great and momentous reforms are to be effected at once. Where the means employed are those of calm appeal to the understanding and the heart, a gradual and steady progress is all that should be desired. The schools of Massachusetts are not every thing that we could wish, but public opinion is sound in reference to their improvement. The voice of reason will not be uttered in vain. Experience, clearly stated in its results, will command respect, and the Board entertain a confident opinion that the increased attention given to the subject will result in making our system of Common-School education fully worthy of the intelligence of the present day, and of the ancient renown of Massachusetts.

All which is respectfully submitted by

EDWARD EVERETT,  
GEORGE HULL,  
JAMES G. CARTER,  
EDMUND DWIGHT,  
GEORGE PUTNAM,  
E. A. NEWTON,  
ROBERT RANTOUL, Jun.,  
JARED SPARKS.

*Boston, February 1, 1838.*

**FIRST ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SECRETARY**  
**OF THE**  
**BOARD OF EDUCATION.**

**1837.**

## REPORT FOR 1837.

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TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION.

GENTLEMEN : — The act of the Legislature, under which you were constituted, authorized the appointment of a Secretary, and specifically prescribed his duties in the following words : — *the Secretary “ shall, under the direction of the Board, collect information of the actual condition and efficiency of the Common Schools and other means of popular education ; and diffuse, as widely as possible, throughout every part of the Commonwealth, information of the most approved and successful methods of arranging the studies and conducting the education of the young, to the end that all children in this Commonwealth, who depend upon the Common Schools for instruction, may have the best education which those schools can be made to impart.”* Having accepted the office of Secretary of the Board, I entered upon the public discharge of its duties, about the close of the month of August last. But before devoting even the brief period of three months to a beginning of the work of “ collecting information of the actual condition and efficiency ” of about three thousand different public schools, and several hundred permanent private schools and academies, I was obliged to return to this city, in order to prepare the “ Annual Abstract of the

School Returns," which, by a law of the Commonwealth, was to be prepared and laid before the Legislature, in a printed form, on or before the second Wednesday in January inst.: — the labor of that preparation having, by a vote of the Board, been devolved upon me. This last work has supplied me with almost incessant occupation ever since my return. It soon became a question, therefore, in my own mind, whether I ought not to consider myself debarred, by the briefness of the time, and the magnitude of the labor, from attempting, at this early period, to submit to the Board any report, relative to the "condition and efficiency of our Common Schools and other means of popular education." But as I was perfectly satisfied that there were a few classes of facts, and some important views, pertaining to this subject, in regard to which a more thorough examination would only supply additional facts of the same kind, and corroborate the same views by additional arguments, I thought it clearly to be my duty not to delay their communications for the sake of presenting them in a less imperfect form, or of fortifying obvious conclusions with cumulative evidence and argument.

I proceed, therefore, to state the principal sources of information consulted, together with some of the facts learned and of the conclusions formed.

Between the 28th of August and the 15th of November last, I met conventions of the friends of education in every county in the State except Suffolk. With the exception of two counties, these conventions were very fully attended, almost all the towns in the respective counties being represented. The character of the conventions for intelligence and moral worth has probably never been surpassed. Selfish and illaudable motives do not tempt men to abandon business, and incur expense,



to attend distant meetings, when no emolument is to be secured, nor offices apportioned. A desire to promote a philanthropic object, whose full beneficence will not be realized until its authors shall have left the stage, must have been the honorable impulse which assembled them together.

Statements, uncontradicted and unquestioned, publicly made at these conventions, by gentlemen worthy of entire confidence, respecting facts alleged to be within their own personal knowledge, I have considered as worthy of full reliance.

Some weeks before commencing this tour of exploration, I addressed to the school committee of every town a circular letter, specifying a number of topics upon which information was sought. A copy of that circular, together with the Address of the Board of Education, referred to therein, is appended to this report. Direct written answers have been received from nearly half the towns in the State, together containing more than half its population. This information I regard as of an authentic and official character.

Having, fortunately for this purpose, been so situated as to form a personal acquaintance with very many of those gentlemen, who, for the last ten years, have been members of one or the other branch of our State Legislature, I determined to avail myself, as far as practicable, of this advantage, to extend into details, and render more minute and particular, my information upon the great subject intrusted to me. I think it not unworthy to be mentioned, that, for this purpose, I adopted a mode of travelling which made me perfect master of my own movements, and rendered it always convenient for me to stop and make inquiries, and to turn off my nearest course, whenever valuable information was supposed to lie on

either side of my direct route. In this way I have travelled between five and six hundred miles, besides going to Dukes County and Nantucket. I have been able, by this means, to inspect the condition of many schoolhouses; and I have personally examined, or obtained exact and specific information regarding the relative size, construction, and condition of about eight hundred of those buildings, and general information concerning, at least, a thousand more. These, together with the school-returns, which have been received this year from two hundred and ninety-four out of the three hundred and five towns in the Commonwealth, and such limited correspondence as I have been able to conduct, have been the principal sources of information consulted.

It would be depriving many persons of a most honorable tribute to which they are *completely* entitled, and it would withhold from the friends of the sacred cause of education one of the highest satisfactions, did I omit to declare, that neither at the conventions which have been held in the several counties, nor in my intercourse or correspondence with any one, has there been infused into this cause the slightest ingredient of partisan politics. In regard to this great subject, all have reverted to their natural relations as fellow-men; discarding strifes about objects which are temporary, for interests which are enduring. In a spirit of harmony and unity, having brought the facts of individual experience and observation into common stock, they have regarded them as a fund, from which the wisest results were to be wrought out by the aid of common counsels.

The object of the Common-School system of Massachusetts was to give to every child in the Commonwealth a free, straight, solid pathway, by which he could walk directly up from the ignorance of an infant to a knowl-

edge of the primary duties of a man ; and would acquire a power and an invincible will to discharge them. Have our children such a way ? Are they walking in it ? Why do so many, who enter it, falter therein ? Are there not many who miss it altogether ? What can be done to reclaim them ? What can be done to rescue faculties, powers, divine endowments, graciously designed for individual and social good, from being perverted to individual and social calamity ? These are the questions of deep and intense interest, which I have proposed to myself, and upon which I have sought for information and counsel.

Our institutions for the education of our children depend for their success not more upon the perfection of their individual parts than upon their just adaptation and concurrent working. The co-operation of many different agents is essential to their prosperity. In examining the causes of failure, therefore, in a system so extensive and complex, not only ought its several parts to be scrutinized and their details mastered, but the relation and fitness of each wheel to the whole machinery should be scanned ; because parts, individually perfect, may counterwork each other from mal-adjustment, and thus impair or even wholly destroy the desired results. I shall make no apology, therefore, for discarding all speculation and theory, and for descending at once to more useful, though perhaps less interesting particulars ; because nothing, however minute, can be unimportant, which will ultimately affect the value of the product.

I am bound, here, to make a preliminary remark, to be steadily kept in view as a qualification of this entire report. In pointing out errors in our system, that they may be rectified, I wish at the same time to aver my belief in the vast preponderance of its excellences over its defects. A specification of the latter, therefore, how-

ever extensive, is not to be understood as questioning the manifold superiority of the former. So, too, in advert-  
ing to non-performances of duty in any one class or body  
of men, or to adverse influences, exerted by any other  
class, I disclaim all personal implication whatever;  
believing that the defects are mainly chargeable on the  
system rather than the individual; and that, in some  
points at least, the errors of the system have been recti-  
fied by the fidelity of its administrators.

There are four cardinal topics, under which all consid-  
erations, relating to our Common Schools, naturally  
arrange themselves. *First* in order is the situation, con-  
struction, condition, and *number* of the schoolhouses. I  
mention the *number* of the schoolhouses under this head,  
because, in populous places, there is a temptation to build  
too few, and to compact too many scholars into one house;  
while towns sparsely populated are beset with the oppo-  
site temptation, of making too minute a subdivision of  
their territory into districts; and thus, in attempting to  
accommodate all with a schoolhouse near by, the accom-  
modation itself is substantially destroyed. In many cases,  
this pursuit of the incident works a forfeiture of the prin-  
cipal. A schoolhouse is erected near by, but it is at the  
expense of having a school in it, so short, as to be of but  
little value.

*Secondly*, the manner, whether intelligent and faithful,  
or inadequate and neglectful, in which school-committee-  
men discharge their duties.

*Thirdly*, the interest felt by the community in the edu-  
cation of *all* its children; and the position in which a  
certain portion of that community stand in relation to the  
free schools.

*Fourthly*, the competency of teachers.

*First*. When it is considered, that more than five-sixths

of all the children in the State spend a considerable portion of the most impressible period of their lives in our schoolhouses, the general condition of those buildings, and their influences upon the young, stand forth, at once, as topics of prominence and magnitude. The construction of schoolhouses connects itself closely with the love of study, with proficiency, health, anatomical formation, and length of life. These are great interests, and therefore suggest great duties. It is believed that, in some important particulars, their structure can be improved without the slightest additional expense; and that, in other respects, a small advance in cost would be returned a thousand-fold in the improvement of those habits, tastes, and sentiments of our children, which are so soon to be developed into public manners, institutions, and laws, and to become unchangeable history. But this topic of schoolhouse architecture is too extensive for present examination. It is my intention, as early as practicable, to prepare a separate report, which shall comprise under one view, and in some detail, the essentials of an edifice devoted to the improvement of the whole life, by improving its beginning.

*Secondly.* School-committee-men, both prudential and superintending, occupy a controlling position in relation to our Common Schools. They are the administrators of the system; and in proportion to the fidelity and intelligence exercised by them, the system will flourish or decline.

Although it is not always in the power of school committees to introduce into the schools devoted and accomplished teachers; yet it is in their power, and it is a most responsible and solemn part of their duty, not to inflict upon the children of a whole district the calamity of an ignorant, ill-tempered, or profane teacher. It is no trivial arbitrament to decide, whether a school shall be a bless-

ing or a nuisance, and therefore the question of a teacher's fitness is not to be guessed at, but solemnly pondered. If the husbandman, by any effort of body or of mind, by toil or supplication, could foredoom and predestinate what sort of seasons should spread mildew and barrenness over his fields, and leave him empty granaries, or what should make his pastures luxuriant and heap his garner, he surely would not be content with conjecture, with superficial and scanty inquiry, or with hasty decisions. And yet what the seasons are to the fields and crops of the farmer, the teacher is to the children of the school. Nay, more; he is season and cultivation also. No part, therefore, of the examination of applicants for schools is form. It is all substance. It is all pregnant with good or evil; because the certificate of the committee is a commission to the teacher, under which he may usurp a place to do but little good, where another would do much; or under which, perhaps, he may do great and remediless harm, without any admixture of good.

The law of 1826 required school committees to obtain evidence of the good moral character of all instructors, and to ascertain, "by personal examination *or otherwise*, their literary qualifications and capacity for the government of schools." In the Revised Statutes, the words "*or otherwise*" were intentionally omitted. Hence the duty of *personal examination* became, in all cases, imperative. So great, however, is the tax imposed by this requirement upon the time of the committees, that from the best information I have been able to obtain, I am led to believe, that in a majority of instances, the examination is either wholly omitted, or is formal and superficial, rather than intent and thorough.

The engagement of a teacher by the prudential committee, subject to the approval of the committee of the

town, is itself a step of great importance ; because there are intrinsic objections to the use of the veto power by the latter, and it can never be exercised without reluctance and hazard. The prudential committee ought not, therefore, to be compelled to close a bargain at the first offer, but he should have opportunity for full inquiries, or, at least, for availing himself of such information as might come in his way, during the season. The law fixes no time for the election of prudential-committeemen, when chosen by the districts. In some large districts, through which I passed late in the autumn, that officer had not been chosen for the current year. When chosen, he could have no opportunity for extended inquiry or discriminating selection, but would be almost compelled to employ the first person whom chance should throw in his way.

Again ; the law expressly requires every teacher to obtain, from the school committee of the town, a certificate of his qualifications "*before he opens the school.*" This implies, that it is a violation of duty on the part of a teacher to open a school previously to obtaining such a certificate ; and also, on the part of the town committee, to examine a teacher after he has opened his school, for the purpose of giving him a retro-active certificate. Magistrates and officers might as well enter upon the discharge of their duties, with the expectation of being qualified some time before or after the close of their official term. The reason for this prohibition upon teachers and committees is unanswerable. After the teacher has intruded into the school without a certificate, other considerations, besides fitness, come in, and strenuously urge, if they do not morally compel, the committee to give him one. Just before a school begins, parents generally make arrangements for dispensing with the personal services of their

children. Some take them away from regular and profitable employments. During the first few weeks of a school, the children never study with the same facility, nor are they able to make the same progress, as afterwards. Even men cannot rally and apply their whole mental forces, on the first day of commencing an unaccustomed work. It is a subject of universal regret with good teachers of short schools, that as soon as the school has gathered impetus, it is arrested. A change of teachers, when a school has just opened, is, in itself, a great misfortune; because different persons have different regulations and different modes of administering them. In all schools, the harness of good order and discipline will chafe a little at first, and some time must elapse before it will sit easy. At the opening of a school, a teacher ought to learn the proficiency of his scholars, for the purpose of arranging classes, and as a basis of judicious advice in regard to advanced studies. In the course of two or three weeks, a teacher of any discernment will get an insight respecting the peculiar temperament and disposition of each scholar, and he will find avenues, or open them, by which a readier access can be had to his pupils' minds. A school will but partially develop its powers of advancement, until teacher and pupils become acquainted; until the standing relations between them are established, and their minds are so mutually fitted into each other as to work without friction. Suppose, at this moment, when the school ought to be under strong headway, the teacher is presented to the committee for examination and approval; and, in addition to such considerations as those above suggested, the prudential committee enforces the demand of a certificate with the plea, that it is now too late in the season to obtain any better substitute. Now, the painful alternative may be directly presented, either to



approve an incompetent teacher, or to reject him and break up the school : — two modes about equally efficient in ruining the school for that season. Between these evils, however, there is a choice ; — a badly kept school being worse than none. Yet the first is the branch of the alternative far the most likely to be accepted ; because the evil of breaking up the school is instant and impending, while that of its continuance, though greater, is remote ; and it is a rule, lamentably prevalent in the actions of men, that when a less but immediate evil comes in competition with one far greater, but more remote, the former prevails. The malignity of the case is, that it enlists all the good motives of the committee on the bad side.

From facts which have come to my knowledge, I am constrained to believe, that, in *two-thirds* at least of the towns in the Commonwealth, this provision of the law, is more or less departed from. And in the great majority of the cases where an examination is had, previous to the opening of the school, it takes place on the very eve of its commencement, when the evils above enumerated must partially ensue from a rejection of the candidate, and, therefore, undue motives in favor of granting a certificate must have a proportionate force.

Another evasion of much rarer occurrence, though of a far more mischievous tendency, is, that the school is kept for the stipulated period, and then the prudential committee gives the teacher an order on the town treasurer, and the town treasurer pays the money, without any certificate ever having been obtained or applied for. Indeed, the relation between the prudential and the town committee, in regard to the employment of teachers, contains in itself an element of variance or hostility, which is oftentimes developed into open rupture, and more often, perhaps, suppressed, by injurious yielding and acquies-

cence on the part of the latter. So manifest is this tendency, and so unhappy its consequences, that very many judicious men maintain the expediency of vesting the whole power of employing teachers in the town committee.

Another duty of the town committee is that of directing what books shall be used in the schools. There is a public evil of great magnitude in the multiplicity and diversity of elementary books. They crowd the market, and infest the schools. One would suppose there might be uniformity in rudiments, at least ; yet the greatest variety prevails. Some books claim superiority, because they make learning easy, and others because they make it difficult. All decry their predecessors, or profess to have discovered new and better modes of teaching. By a change of books, a child is often obliged to unlearn what he had laboriously acquired before. In many important particulars, the pronunciation, the orthography, and the syntax of our language changes, according to the authority consulted. Truth and philosophy, in regard to teaching, assume so many shapes, that common minds begin to doubt whether there be truth or philosophy under any. The advantages of cheapness, resulting from improvements in the art of printing, are intercepted from the public, to whom they rightfully belong, and divided among compilers. Over this, as an expensive public mischief, as a general discouragement to learning, and as a misfortune of the Commonwealth, town committees have no control. But it is still in their power, and it is an important and substantial part of their duty, as enjoined by law, "to direct what books shall be used in the several schools," in their respective towns. When the committee fail in directing what books shall be used, a way is opened for the introduction of books which are

expressly prohibited by law, as "calculated to favor the tenets of particular sects of Christians." Under such omission, also, the schoolhouse may cease to be neutral ground between those different portions of society, now so vehemently contending against each other on a variety of questions of social and national duty. Instances of both kinds have occurred, and were, under such circumstances, to be expected; because it is the nature of extreme views to make all other truths bow down before the idolized truth. But the liability and the temptation should be cut off. Would the disciples of hostile doctrines look forward, and foresee to what results a breach of the truce in regard to the schoolroom must infallibly lead, it seems scarcely credible that each should not agree, in good faith, to refrain from every attempt to pre-occupy the minds of school children with his side of vexed and complicated questions, whether of state, or theology; and that all should not concur, in regard to an evil so self-propagating and ruinous, in enforcing measures which would bar out the possibility of its occurrence. The only reason urged by school committees for a non-compliance with the provision of law in relation to selecting books, is, that parents object to the expense of purchasing so many new books as would give uniform sets to the school. Hence the evil is endued with a self-perpetuating power; because, as it increases, the obstacle to its removal increases also. Where a diversity of books prevails in a school, there will necessarily be unfitness and mal-adjustment in the classification of scholars. Those who ought to recite together are separated by a difference of books. If eight or ten scholars, in geography, for instance, have eight or ten different books, as has sometimes happened, instead of one recitation for all, there must be eight or ten recitations. Thus the teach-

er's time is crumbled into dust and dissipated. Put a question to a class of ten scholars, and wait a moment for each one to prepare an answer in his own mind, and then name the one to give the answer, and there are ten mental operations going on simultaneously; and each one of the ten scholars will profit more by this social recitation than he would by a solitary one of the same length. But if there must be ten recitations, instead of one, the teacher is, as it were, divided by ten, and reduced to the tenth part of a teacher. Nine-tenths of his usefulness is destroyed. The same would be true in regard to most other studies. This irretrievable loss is incurred, merely because parents will not agree to procure the best books.

It would seem, beforehand, that no duty of school committees could be more acceptable to parents, than that of enforcing a uniformity of books in all the schools of a town. Every school, where there are no regulations upon this subject, holds out a standing invitation to every book-peddler and speculator, to foist in his books, which may be new, or they may be books whose sheets have been printed for years, but garnished with a new title-page bearing a recent date. The diversity may be aggravated through the intervention of the teacher, who often desires to introduce the books from which he, himself, learnt, or has been accustomed to teach. But if the books are prescribed, all applications for a change must be made directly to the committee, and imposition becomes impracticable, or, at least, the chances of it are very much reduced. While the diversity continues, each succeeding teacher will urge the children to procure his favorite books; the children will importune their parents, and enough of them will prevail to perpetuate the mischief. There cannot be a doubt, that the aggregate ex-

pense of books, for any given number of years, will be much greater in towns where the committee are thwarted by the parents in the discharge of this duty, than in towns where it is duly performed. In this, as in any other operation or business whatever, the absence of system and pre-arrangement doubles cost and halves profits. Families can rarely remove from one town to another, and, very often, they cannot, even from one district to another in the same town, without incurring the expense of a new set of books for their children. This bears, in every respect, most hardly upon the poor.

Notwithstanding the manifest advantages of a performance of this branch of duty, and the grievous mischiefs resulting from its neglect, it is neglected in about *one hundred towns*, or one-third part of the towns in the Commonwealth.

The law further provides, that, in case any scholar shall not be furnished by his parent, master, or guardian, with the requisite books, "he shall be supplied therewith at the expense of the town." Few things seem more preposterous than to send children to school, or to keep them there, for the purpose of *not* studying. Half a dozen children, stationed in different parts of a school, with nothing to do for want of books, will soon enlist three times their number in the same service. In not less than forty towns is this duty wholly omitted. Children attend school, surrounded by temptations to mischief, and without any means of occupation.

An inquiry into the "regulation and discipline" of the schools is another of the duties enjoined upon the town committee; and so important is this duty, in the judgment of the law, that its performance is commanded, not only at the opening and close of the schools, but at each of the monthly visitations. Under this head, many points

are embraced, vital to the cause of Common-School education. I will give but a single example. The "regulation" of a school comprises the means of insuring as much punctuality and regularity as possible in the attendance of all the children in the district. Absences and tardiness are great obstructions to progress. The punctual are injured by them hardly less than the delinquent. In some towns, the excellent practice of keeping daily registers by the teachers, to be exhibited to the committee at each visitation, of holding the scholars to a strict account for all absences, and of discouraging desertion from the school by all other practicable means, has obviated almost all delinquencies of this kind. In other towns, where the attendance upon school is prompted by no motive, nor enforced by any salutary regulation, habits of idleness and truantslip in the present children are laying the foundations of vagrancy, poverty, and vice in the future men.

In connection with this topic of the "regulation" of a school, as one of the means of securing punctuality in the attendance of scholars, it is material to advert to another provision of the law, which makes it the joint and several duty of school committees, resident ministers of the gospel, and selectmen, "in their several towns, to exert their influence and use their best endeavors, that the youth of their towns shall regularly attend the schools established for their instruction." The success attendant upon the exertions of these officers, to secure a "regular" attendance upon schools, will appear by the following statement : —

The whole number of children, in the 294 towns which have made returns, who are between <i>four</i> and <i>sixteen</i> years of age, is	177,053
If from this number we deduct twelve thousand, as the number of children who attend private schools and academies, and do not attend the public schools at all, there will remain	165,053

Whole number of scholars <i>of all ages</i> , attending school in winter	141,837
Whole number of scholars <i>of all ages</i> , attending school in summer	122,889
The <i>average</i> attendance in winter is	111,520
Do. Do. in summer is	94,956
So that the average attendance, in winter, of children <i>of all ages</i> , falls below the whole number of children in the State between 4 and 16 years of age, who depend wholly upon the Common Schools	53,533
And in summer it falls below that number	70,097

That is, a portion of the children, dependent wholly upon the Common Schools, absent themselves from the winter school, either permanently or occasionally, equal to a permanent absence of about one-third of their whole number; and a portion absent themselves from the summer schools, either permanently or occasionally, equal to a permanent absence of considerably more than two-fifths of their whole number.

The average length of all the schools in the two hundred and ninety-four towns heard from is six months and twenty-five days each, for the whole year. Were the winter and summer terms equal in length, this average would give three months and twelve days and a half to each. But, on account of the voluntary absences from school, the winter term is reduced to the scholars, on an average, to about two months and one week, and the summer term to two months and an inconsiderable fraction; or, taking both winter and summer terms, to about four months and one week in the year. And so much as some scholars, dependent upon the Common School, actually attend school more, just so much do others actually attend less.

Were it certain that the number, *one hundred and seventy-seven thousand and fifty-three*, was not an over-estimate of the children between four and sixteen years of age, and did the returns embrace all the children of

all ages attending in all the public schools, it would appear that forty-two thousand one hundred and sixty-four children, wholly dependent upon the Common Schools, have not, the past year, attended school at all in the summer; and twenty-three thousand two hundred and sixteen, neither in summer nor winter. There is some reason to believe, that from omissions in the returns, and, perhaps, from other causes, the total of the children of all ages, attending all the schools, is rather too low. After making every possible allowance, however, the returns exhibit frightful evidence of the number of children, who either do not go to school at all, or go so little as not to be reckoned among the scholars.

In this State, where the traditional habits and usages of the people exact some term of apprenticeship for all arts — except for the most difficult of all, the art of teaching — an intelligent and assiduous committee can do much, by way of counsel and sympathy, to encourage teachers, if not to capacitate them for the discharge of their delicate and arduous work. No person, fitted by Nature even for a temporary guardianship of the young, if not specially taught and skilled for his office, can remain in school a single week, without a deep consciousness of incapacity for interesting, guiding, and elevating the beings intrusted to his tutelage. In this condition of things, the committee are his only resource; and, if they also are incompetent to counsel and enlighten, accident and darkness must preside over the education of our youth.

Another important duty enjoined upon school committees is the visitation of the schools. Such visitations may be a moral incitement to the scholars, of great efficacy. Advice, encouragement, affectionate persuasion, coming from such of their townsmen as the children have been



accustomed to regard with respect or veneration, will sink deep and remain long in their hearts. Wise counsel from acknowledged superiors makes a deep impress. It comes with the momentum of a heavy body, falling from a great height. The same counsel, if the same could be had, from men whom the children hold in no respect or esteem, might be remembered only to be ridiculed. The visitations of the committee break in upon the monotony of the school. They spur the slothful, and reward the emulous and aspiring. To suppose that the children in a school will ever feel a keen, impulsive interest in learning, while parents and neighbors are disregarding of it, is to suppose the children to be wiser than the men. The stimulus of acting under the public eye, though an inferior motive, is still an allowable one amongst adults. To the mind of the sworn officer, is it not more pleasant than his oath? Do not much of the uprightness and thoroughness brought to the discharge of public duties depend upon their being performed under public inspection? And why, in regard to children, may we not avail ourselves of this innate sentiment as an auxiliary in the attainment of knowledge; always holding it subordinate to the supreme sentiment of duty? I have heard hundreds of teachers, with one voice, attest its utility. Such visitations by the committee are not less useful to teachers than to pupils. While all due respect should be accorded to teachers—and certainly no class in the community are more deserving both of emolument and of social consideration than they—yet, as our school-system is now administered, we are not authorized to anticipate any more fidelity and strenuousness in the fulfilment of duty from them than from the same number of persons engaged in any reputable employment. This State employs, annually, in the Common Schools, more than three thou-

sand teachers, at an expense of more than *four hundred and sixty-five thousand dollars*, raised by direct taxation. But they have not one-thousandth part of the supervision which watches the same number of persons, having the care of cattle or spindles, or of the retail of shop-goods. Who would retain his reputation, not for prudence, but for sanity, if he employed men on his farm, or in his factory, or clerks in his counting-room, month after month, without oversight and even without inquiry? In regard to what other service are we so indifferent, where the remuneration swells to such an aggregate?

Being deeply impressed with these views, I inserted in the circular an interrogatory upon this subject; and wherever I have been, I have made constant inquiries whether this duty of visitation were performed, agreeably to law. I have heard from nearly all the towns in the State. The result is, that not in more than fifty or sixty towns, out of the three hundred and five, has there been any pretence of a compliance with the law; and in regard to some of these towns, after a reference to the requisitions of the statute, the allegation of a compliance has been withdrawn, as having been made in ignorance of the extent of its provisions.

It would be unjust to attribute the omission even of this important duty to any peculiar deadness or dormancy, on the part of committees, towards the great interest of our Common Schools. No body of men in the community have performed services for the public, at all comparable to theirs, for so little of the common inducements of honor and emolument. In not more than about one-fifth part of the towns do the committee receive either compensation or re-imbursement for devoting from six to sixty days of time to the duties of their office, and for incurring expenses of horse and carriage hire, amounting to *ten* or

*twenty*, and sometimes even to *thirty* dollars per annum. Where any thing is given, it rarely exceeds a quarter of the lowest wages of day labor. The towns paying most liberally, I believe, are Falmouth and Sandwich, in the county of Barnstable, where one dollar a day, and sixpence a mile for travel, are given. In a very few other towns, the compensation is fixed at seventy-five cents for each visit (understood to occupy a full half-day); in a few more, fifty cents a visit is paid; but in most other cases, it is a small fixed sum to be given to the chairman or the secretary of the committee, or to be divided between the members of the Board;—as in *Lincoln*, ten dollars to chairman; in *Haverhill* and *Hingham*, ten dollars to the clerk or secretary; in *East Hampton*, eight dollars for the whole Board; in *Cummington* and *Wareham*, five dollars for each member; in *Franklin*, three dollars for each; in *Williamsburg*, once, nine dollars for all, and so forth. To the inquiry, *Whether paid or not?* the letter of the answer in some cases, and, in many others, the spirit of it, has been, “*Neither paid nor thanked.*” In many cases, where gentlemen have served gratuitously in the office for several years, and have then presented a bill for expenses merely, they have been dropped from the board for the ensuing year: in others, where, after having served for years in succession, and, having been re-elected, they have offered to accept, on condition of receiving half as much as was allowed for working upon the highways, as a means of defraying their expenses, the offer has been rejected by a vote of the town, and the vacancy more cheaply filled. Neither does there seem to be any social consideration attached to the station. While the office of selectman and of representative to the general court is often an object of avidity, the more useful, responsible, and intrinsically honorable office of school-committee-

man is shunned as thankless and burdensome. It is not to be disguised, that, in many places, it encounters opposition and reproach, just in proportion to the fidelity with which its obligations are observed. In many of the principal towns in the Commonwealth, committee-men have been chosen, year after year, by not more than ten or twenty votes; and, upon their declining, the vacancies have been filled by as small a number. In one town, containing three hundred voters, they were once chosen by three votes. In many places it is strikingly observable, that persons desirous of certain other offices are especially wary of this. In others, again, it has been necessary to resort to the expedient of electing persons not present at the meeting, in order that the office might be nominally filled. Other towns, again, have chosen them, in order to avoid the penalty of the law, and to obtain their distributive share of the school-fund, with an express understanding that they should discharge none of their duties, except making their return to the Secretary of State.

Dormancy and deadness, therefore, in regard to this plastic institution, now moulding and fashioning the beings upon whom all the interests of society are so soon to devolve, seem chargeable upon the people, who not only deny all remuneration for the loss of time, and even all re-imbursement for expenses incurred, but many of whom thwart and baffle the due administration of the office, and render the duties they impose onerous and unwelcome. Hence it often happens, that the citizens, best qualified for the station, decline its acceptance; or, having accepted it, they abridge its labors, and thereby curtail its usefulness. Clergymen allege, that their relation to the schools has been modified by recent legislation. Their parishes were once territorial, now they are poll; and thus the special relation they once sustained to all the schools

within their territory is dissolved. Once they owed a special debt to society for their immunity from taxation ; now that obligation is cancelled. From this or some other cause it has happened, that a public school, kept the whole twelve months, in a place where several clergymen were constantly resident, has never been visited by any of them for a succession of years. Public men and professional men decline the service on account of their various engagements. The industrious aver, that " time is money ; " thus alleging a maxim, designed only to enforce a lower duty, as a justification for disregarding a higher ; and forgetting that it is no more true that " time is money " than it is that " time is knowledge, or wisdom, or virtue," because it may be converted into the latter, as easily and certainly as into the former. But, I repeat, the fault is in the system, more than in the individuals. At every convention I have attended, from every intelligent individual with whom I have conversed, no opinion has been so universal and emphatic, as that our institution of Common Schools will continue to languish and cannot be revived, until wise boards of school-committeemen shall, themselves, be a living exposition of the law and shall make all its provisions in regard to the " examination of teachers," the " selection " and " supply " of books, the " visitation " and " the regulation and discipline of the schools," and " the habits and proficiency of the scholars," as legible in their actions as on the pages of the statute-book.

The law exacts a performance of duty from other municipal officers, under the sanction of a penalty ; because, as they receive something by way of fee or per diem allowance, they may well be held amenable for any official delinquency. But the framers of ~~the law~~ prescribing the duties of committee-men must have felt the

flagrant injustice of denouncing any penalty for derelictions, when the demands upon time and money were so ample, and the requital nothing. Hence an entire abandonment of duty involves no forfeiture, and subjects to no animadversion. Such abandonment has occurred, and been tolerated and acquiesced in, if not demanded, by public sentiment. At one convention it was stated, openly and without contradiction, by a gentleman of high respectability, in the presence of his colleagues and others, who must have known the case, that in his town, containing about *forty* school districts, the school-committee, for eight or more successive years, had never examined a teacher, nor visited a school. During this long intermission of duty, the children in the public schools passed through *two-thirds* of the whole of their school-going life. Many other cases have come to my knowledge, calculated to excite the deepest alarm in every mind which sees the character of the next generation of men foreshadowed and prophesied in the direction which is given to the children of this.

I feel it my duty, therefore, to submit to the Board of Education the expediency of recommending to the general court, the appropriation of some portion of the income of the school-fund, when divided among the towns, as a compensation to school-committees for the discharge of duties so laborious and influential. Were this done, there would then be justice and propriety, certainly in cases of gross delinquency, in subjecting them to legal animadversion, or withholding from their respective towns their share of the annual apportionment. This course would relieve the towns from the burden of taxing themselves to pay the committee. The single fact of being obliged to render a written account to the town, of their services, at the end of each year, would prompt to

punctuality and fidelity, and create another impulse to duty. It may be said, that, in some towns, the money would be paid without much valuable consideration in services rendered ; but this, it is believed, would happen in but few cases, even at first, and would not be lastingly true anywhere. Such a provision might require some slight modification in the constitution of the board of town committees. Indeed, is it not worthy of consideration, whether some plan may not be adopted in distributing the income of the school-fund, which would assist towns or districts in purchasing apparatus or school libraries, or in doing some other thing for the benefit of the schools, which they cannot conveniently, or will not ordinarily, do without such assistance ? The fund would then be a stimulant instead of an opiate.

Could the complement of service be secured from committees as well without compensation as with it, undoubtedly such unbought efforts would infuse into the system a quicker life and a higher energy ; because work is always better done, just in proportion as it is done from a higher motive. But in this case, I am satisfied, that the only alternative presented us is, between a groping and dilatory performance, on the one hand, and such faithful, though not wholly disinterested efforts, on the other, as may be commanded for a moderate requital.

It is obvious, that neglectful school-committees, incompetent teachers, and an indifferent public, may go on degrading each other, until the noble system of free schools shall be abandoned by a people, so self-abased as to be unconscious of their abasement.

*Thirdly.* Another topic, in some respects kindred to the last, is the apathy of the people themselves towards our Common Schools. The wide usefulness of which this institution is capable is shorn away on both sides,

by two causes diametrically opposite. On one side, there is a portion of the community, who do not attach sufficient value to the system to do the things necessary to its healthful and energetic working. They may say excellent things about it, they may have a conviction of its general utility; but they do not understand, that the wisest conversation not embodied in action, that convictions too gentle and quiet to coerce performance, are little better than worthless. The prosperity of the system always requires some labor. It requires a conciliatory disposition, and oftentimes a little sacrifice of personal preferences. A disagreement about the location of a schoolhouse, for instance, may occasion the division of a district, and thus inflict permanent impotency upon each of its parts. In such cases, a spirit of forbearance and compromise, averting the evil, would double the common fund of knowledge for every child in the territory. Except in those cases where it is made necessary by the number of the scholars, the dismemberment of a district, though it may leave the body, drains out its life-blood. So, through remissness or ignorance on the part of parent and teacher, the minds of children may never be awakened to a consciousness of having, within themselves, blessed treasures of innate and noble faculties, far richer than any outward possessions can be; they may never be supplied with any foretaste of the enduring satisfactions of knowledge; and hence, they may attend school for the allotted period, merely as so many male and female automata, between four and sixteen years of age. As the progenitor of the human race, after being perfectly fashioned in every limb and organ and feature, might have lain till this time, a motionless body in the midst of the beautiful garden of Eden, had not the Creator breathed into him a living soul; so children, without some favoring



influences to woo out and cheer their faculties, may remain mere inanimate forms, while surrounded by the paradise of knowledge. It is generally believed, that there is an increasing class of people amongst us, who are losing sight of the necessity of securing ample opportunities for the education of their children. And thus, on one side, the institution of Common Schools is losing its natural support, if it be not incurring actual opposition.

- . Opposite to this class, who tolerate, from apathy, a depression in the Common Schools, there is another class, who affix so high a value upon the culture of their children, and understand so well the necessity of a skilful preparation of means for its bestowment, that they turn away from the Common Schools, in their depressed state, and seek, elsewhere, the helps of a more enlarged and thorough education. Thus the standard, in descending to a point corresponding with the views and wants of one portion of society, falls below the demands and the regards of another. Out of different feelings grow different plans; and while one remains fully content with the Common School, the other builds up the private school or the academy. The education fund is thus divided into two parts. Neither of the halves does a quarter of the good which might be accomplished by a union of the whole. One party pays an adequate price, but has a poor school; the other has a good school, but at more than fourfold cost. Were their funds and their interest combined, the poorer school might be as good as the best, and the dearest almost as low as the cheapest. This last-mentioned class embraces a considerable portion, perhaps a majority, of the wealthy persons in the State; but it also includes another portion, numerically much greater, who, whether rich or poor,

have a true perception of the sources of their children's individual and domestic well-being, and who consider the common necessities of their life, their food and fuel and clothes, and all their bodily comforts, as superfluities, compared with the paramount necessity of a proper mental and moral culture of their offspring.

The maintenance of free schools rests wholly upon the social principle. It is emphatically a case where men, individually powerless, are collectively strong. The population of Massachusetts, being more than *eighty* to the square mile, gives it the power of maintaining Common Schools. Take the whole range of the western and south-western States, and their population, probably, does not exceed a dozen or fifteen to the square mile. Hence, except in favorable localities, Common Schools are impossible; as the population upon a territory of convenient size for a district is too small to sustain a school. Here, nothing is easier. But by dividing our funds, we cast away our natural advantages. We voluntarily reduce ourselves to the feebleness of a State, having but half our density of population.

It is generally supposed, that this severance of interests, and consequent diminution of power, have increased much of late, and are now increasing in an accelerated ratio. This is probable, for it is a self-aggravating evil. Its origin and progress are simple and uniform. Some few persons in a village or town, finding the advantages of the Common School inadequate to their wants, unite to establish a private one. They transfer their children from the former to the latter. The heart goes with the treasure. The Common School ceases to be visited by those whose children are in the private. Such parents decline serving as committee-men. They have now no personal motive to vote for, or advocate, any increase of

the town's annual appropriation for schools ; to say nothing of the temptation to discourage such increase in indirect ways, or even to vote directly against it. If, by this means, some of the best scholars happen to be taken from the Common School, the standard of that school is lowered. The lower classes in a school have no abstract standard of excellence, and seldom aim at higher attainments than such as they daily witness. All children, like all men, rise easily to the common level. There the mass stop ; strong minds only ascend higher. But raise the standard, and, by a spontaneous movement, the mass will rise again, and reach it. Hence the removal of the most forward scholars from a school is not a small misfortune. Again : the teacher of the Common School rarely visits or associates, except where the scholars of his own school are the origin of the acquaintance, and the bond of attachment. All this inevitably depresses and degrades the Common School. In this depressed and degraded state, another portion of the parents find it, in fitness and adequacy, inferior to their wants ; and, as there is now a private school in the neighborhood, the strength of the inducement, and the facility of the transfer, overbalance the objection of increased expense, and the doors of the Common School close, at once, upon their children, and upon their interest in its welfare. Thus another blow is dealt ; then others escape ; action and re-action alternate, until the Common School is left to the management of those, who have not the desire or the power, either to improve it or to command a better. Under this silent, but rapid corrosion, it recently happened, in one of the most flourishing towns of the State, having a population of more than three thousand persons, that the principal district school actually ran down and was not kept for two years. I have been repeatedly assured, where every bias of my

informants would lead them to extenuate and not to magnify the facts, that, in populous villages and central districts, where there is naturally a concentration of wealth and intelligence, and a juster appreciation of the blessings of a good education, and where, therefore, the Common School ought to be the best in the town, it was the poorest.

Believing that this subject bears very nearly the same relation to the healthfulness of our republican institutions that air does to animal life, I must solicit for it, in some detail, the consideration of the Board. Our law enacts, that every town containing *five hundred* families, or householders (taken here to be equivalent to *three thousand* inhabitants, or six persons to a family, on an average), shall maintain a school, to be kept by a master of competent ability and good morals, "*for the benefit of all the inhabitants of the town,*" ten months, at least, exclusive of vacations, in each year, who, in addition to the branches of learning to be taught in the district schools, shall give instruction in the history of the United States, book-keeping, surveying, geometry, and algebra; and in towns of *four thousand* inhabitants, the master of such school shall be competent to instruct in the Latin and Greek languages, and general history, rhetoric, and logic. In this Commonwealth, there are *forty-three* towns, exclusive of the city of Boston, coming within the provisions above recited. I leave this city out of the computation, because the considerations, appertaining to it in connection with this subject, are peculiar to itself. I need only mention, that Common Schools, in Boston, valuable as they are, bear no proportion to the whole means of education and improvement which they do in the country. These *forty-three* towns contain an aggregate of about *two-fifths* of all the population of the State, exclu-

sive of the metropolis. Of these *forty-three* towns, only *fourteen* maintain those schools "for the benefit of all the inhabitants of the town," which the law requires. The other *twenty-nine* towns, in which this provision of the law is wholly disregarded, contain a very large fraction over *one-fifth* part of the whole population of the State, out of Boston. These twenty-nine delinquent towns, if we leave out the three cities of Boston, Lowell, and Salem, stand in the very front rank of wealth and population. They contain thirty-three thousand five hundred and sixty-six persons between the ages of four and sixteen years. And while the two hundred and ninety-four towns, heard from, raise by taxes, for the support of Common Schools, a sum equal to two dollars and eighty-one cents for each of the one hundred and sixty-five thousand and fifty-three persons supposed to be wholly dependent upon the Common Schools, these twenty-nine rich and populous towns raise but two dollars and twenty-one cents each for the thirty-three thousand five hundred and sixty-six children they contain between the ages of four and sixteen years. And so much as these wealthy towns fall short of their contributive share of the two dollars and eighty-one cents, so much must the other towns overrun theirs. In these twenty-nine towns, which do not keep the "town school" required by law, the sum of forty-seven thousand seven hundred and seventy-six dollars is expended in private schools and academies, while only seventy-four thousand three hundred and thirteen dollars is expended for the support of public schools.

The average expense for tuition of all those attending private schools and academies, inclusive of those small and short private schools which are kept in the districts between the winter and summer terms, and which com-

prise, probably, more than one-half of the scholars attending the whole number, is more than fourfold the average expense of those attending the public schools.

In the above computation, respecting towns obliged by law to maintain a school "for the benefit of all the inhabitants," I have included in the class, observant of the law, one town where no such school is yet established, but preparations only are making to open one the ensuing season; and two other towns, where, though such schools exist, yet their accommodations for room, and their provisions for instruction, are so limited as to render the adoption of arbitrary rules absolutely indispensable, for the exclusion of many children desirous of attending them. The results would have been far more criminating, had I not adopted this most exculpatory construction.

The refusal of the town to maintain the free town school<sup>7</sup> drives a portion of its inhabitants to establish the private school or academy. When established, these institutions tend strongly to diminish the annual appropriations of the town; they draw their ablest recruits from the Common Schools; and, by being able to offer higher compensation, they have a pre-emptive right to the best qualified teachers; while, simultaneously, the district schools are reduced in length, deteriorated in quality, and, to some extent, bereft of talents competent for instruction.

Some objections are urged, on both sides, to a restitution of our system to its original design; but, as they are anti-social in their nature they must be dissipated by a more enlarged view of the subject. Citizens, living remote from the place where the town school would probably be kept, allege the difference in the distances of residence, and the consequent inequality of advantages derivable from it, as arguments against its maintenance.

They, therefore, resist its establishment, and thus extinguish all chances of a better education for a vast majority of the children in the town, whatever may be their talents or genius. They debar some, perhaps their own offspring, from the means of reaching a higher sphere of usefulness and honor. They forbid their taking the first steps, which are as necessary as the last, in the ascension to excellence. They surrender every vantage-ground to those who can and will, in any event, command the means of a higher education for their children. Because the balance of advantages cannot be mathematically adjusted, as in the nature of things it cannot be, they cast their own shares into the adverse scale; as though it were some compensation, when there is not an absolute equality, to make the inequality absolute. The cost of education is nothing to the rich, while the means of it are every thing to the poor.

Even if the argument against the town school, thus broadly stated, had validity, its force is essentially impaired by the consideration, that this class of schools need not be confined to one fixed place; as the statute expressly provides, that they may be kept "alternately at such places in the town, as the inhabitants at their annual meeting shall determine."

On the other hand, the patrons of the private school plead the moral necessity of sustaining it, because, they say, some of the children in the public school are so addicted to profanity or obscenity, so prone to trickishness, or to vulgar and mischievous habits, as to render a removal of their own children from such contaminating influences an obligatory precaution. But would such objectors bestow that guardian care, that parental watchfulness, upon the Common Schools, which an institution, so wide and deep-reaching in its influences, demands of

all intelligent men, might not these repellent causes be mainly abolished? Reforms ought to be originated and carried forward by the intelligent portion of society; by those who can see most links in the chain of causes and effects; and that intelligence is false to its high trusts, which stands aloof from the labor of enlightening the ignorant and ameliorating the condition of the unfortunate. And what a vision must rise before the minds of all men, endued with the least glimmer of foresight, in the reflection, that, after a few swift years, those children whose welfare they now discard, and whose associations they deprecate, will constitute more than *five-sixths* of the whole body of that community, of which their own children will be only a feeble minority, vulnerable at every point, and utterly incapable of finding a hiding-place for any earthly treasure, where the witness, the juror, and the voter cannot reach and annihilate it!]

The theory of our laws and institutions undoubtedly is, *first*, that in every district of every town in the Commonwealth, there should be a free district school, sufficiently safe, and sufficiently good, for all the children within its territory, where they may be well instructed in the rudiments of knowledge, formed to propriety of demeanor, and imbued with the principles of duty; and *secondly*, in regard to every town, having such an increased population as implies the possession of sufficient wealth, that there should be a school of an advanced character, offering an equal welcome to each one of the same children, whom a peculiar destination, or an impelling spirit of genius, shall send to its open doors,—especially to the children of the poor, who cannot incur the expenses of a residence from home in order to attend such a school. It is on this common platform, that a general acquaintanceship should be formed between the



children of the same neighborhood. It is here that the affinities of a common nature should unite them together so as to give the advantages of pre-occupancy and a stable possession to fraternal feelings, against the alienating competitions of subsequent life.

After the State shall have secured to all its children that basis of knowledge and morality which is indispensable to its own security ; after it shall have supplied them with the instruments of that individual prosperity, whose aggregate will constitute its own social prosperity ; then they may be emancipated from its tutelage, each one to go whithersoever his well-instructed mind shall determine. At this point, seminaries for higher learning, academies and universities, should stand ready to receive, at private cost, all whose path to any ultimate destination may lie through their halls. Subject, of course, to many exceptions, — all, however, inconsiderable, compared with the generality of the rule, — this is the paternal and comprehensive theory of our institutions ; and is it possible, that a practical contradiction of this theory can be wise, until another shall be devised, offering some chances at least of equally valuable results ?

Amongst any people, sufficiently advanced in intelligence to perceive that hereditary opinions on religious subjects are not always coincident with truth, it cannot be overlooked, that the tendency of the private-school system is to assimilate our modes of education to those of England, where Churchmen and Dissenters, — each sect according to its own creed, — maintain separate schools, in which children are taught, from their tenderest years, to wield the sword of polemics with fatal dexterity ; and where the gospel, instead of being a temple of peace, is converted into an armory of deadly weapons, for social, interminable warfare. Of such disastrous con-

sequences, there is but one remedy and one preventive. It is the elevation of the Common Schools. Until that is accomplished (for which, however, they ought to co-operate), those who are able, not only will, but they are bound by the highest obligations to provide surer and better means for the education of their children.

It ought not to be omitted, that it is urged, in defence of the private-school system, that it is preparing a class of better teachers for the Common Schools than they could otherwise obtain. Suppose, however, that the Common Schools were what they should be, could not they prepare the teachers as well?

I trust I shall not be deemed to have given an undue importance to the different interests involved in this topic, when it is considered, that more than *five-sixths* of the children in the State are dependent upon the Common Schools for instruction, and would have no substitute if they became valueless; while less than *one-sixth* are educated in the private schools and academies, and these would be educated, even if the Common Schools were abolished. To hold *one-sixth* of the children to be equal to five-sixths, I should deem to be as great an error in morals as it would be in arithmetic.

The number of scholars attending private schools and academies (if we allow four thousand for Boston, which omitted to make any return respecting that fact the present year, but which returned four thousand as the number last year) is twenty-seven thousand two hundred and sixty-six, and the aggregate paid for their tuition, \$328,026.75, while the sum raised by taxation, for all the children in the State, is only \$465,228.04.

*Fourthly.* Another component element in the prosperity of schools is the competency of teachers. Teaching is the most difficult of all arts, and the profoundest

of all sciences. In its absolute perfection, it would involve a complete knowledge of the whole being to be taught, and of the precise manner in which every possible application would affect it; that is, a complete knowledge of all the powers and capacities of the individual, with their exact proportions and relations to each other, and a knowledge, how, at any hour or moment, to select and apply, from a universe of means, the one then exactly apposite to its ever-changing condition. But in a far more limited and practical sense, it involves a knowledge of the principal laws of physical, mental, and moral growth, and of the tendency of means, not more to immediate than to remote results. Hence to value schools, by length instead of quality, is a matchless absurdity. Arithmetic, grammar, and the other rudiments, as they are called, comprise but a small part of the teachings in a school. The rudiments of feeling are taught not less than the rudiments of thinking. The sentiments and passions get more lessons than the intellect. Though their open recitations may be less, their secret rehearsals are more. And even in training the intellect, much of its chance of arriving, in after-life, at what we call sound judgment, or common sense, much of its power of perceiving ideas as distinctly as though they were colored diagrams, depends upon the tact and philosophic sagacity of the teacher. He has a far deeper duty to perform than to correct the erroneous results of intellectual processes. The error in the individual case is of little consequence. It is the false projecting power in the mind, — the power which sends out the error, — that is to be discovered and rectified; otherwise the error will be repeated as often as opportunities recur. It is no part of a teacher's vocation to spend day after day in moving the hands on the dial-plate backwards and forwards, in

order to adjust them to the true time : but he is to adjust the machinery and the regulator, so that they may indicate the true time ; so that they may be a standard and measure for other things, instead of needing other things as a standard and measure for them. Yet how can a teacher do this, if he be alike ignorant of the mechanism and the propelling power of the machinery he superintends ?

The law lays its weighty injunctions upon teachers, in the following solemn and impressive language : “ *It shall be the duty of all instructors of youth to exert their best endeavors to impress on the minds of children and youth, committed to their care and instruction, the principles of piety, justice, and a sacred regard to truth, love to their country, humanity, and universal benevolence, sobriety, industry, and frugality, chastity, moderation, and temperance, and those other virtues, which are the ornament of human society, and the basis upon which a republican constitution is founded ; and it shall be the duty of such instructors to endeavor to lead their pupils, as their ages and capacities will admit, into a clear understanding of the tendency of the above-mentioned virtues to preserve and perfect a republican constitution, and secure the blessings of liberty, as well as to promote their future happiness, and also to point out to them the evil tendency of the opposite vices.*” Is it not worthy of the most solemn deliberation, whether, under our present system, or rather our present want of system, in regard to the qualifications and appointment of teachers, we are in any way of realizing, to a reasonable and practicable extent, a fulfilment of the elevated purposes contemplated by the law ? And will not an impartial posterity inquire what measures had been adopted by the lawgiver to insure the execution of the duties which he had himself so earnestly and solemnly enjoined ?

Wherever the discharge of my duties has led me through the State, with whatever intelligent men I have conversed, the conviction has been expressed with entire unanimity, that there is an extensive want of competent teachers for the Common Schools. This opinion casts no reproach upon that most worthy class of persons, engaged in the sacred cause of education ; and I should be unjust to those, whose views I am here reporting, should I state the fact more distinctly than the qualification. The teachers are as good as public opinion has demanded. Their attainments have corresponded with their opportunities ; and the supply has answered the demand as well in quality as in number. Yet, in numerous instances, school committees have alleged, in justification of their approval of incompetent persons, the utter impossibility of obtaining better for the compensation offered. It was stated publicly by a member of the school committee of a town, containing thirty or more school districts, that one-half at least of the teachers approved by them would be rejected, only that it would be in vain to expect better teachers for present remuneration. And, without a change in prices, is it reasonable to expect a change in competency, while talent is invited, through so many other avenues, to emolument and distinction ? From the Abstract of the School Returns of this Commonwealth (which I have this day submitted to the Board), including Boston, Salem, Lowell, Charlestown, and other towns, with their liberal salaries, it appears that the average wages per month paid to male teachers throughout the State, inclusive of board, is twenty-five dollars and forty-four cents ; and to female teachers, eleven dollars and thirty-eight cents. Considering that many more than half of the whole number of teachers are employed in the counties bordering on the sea, it is supposed that two

dollars and fifty cents a week for males, and one dollar and fifty cents a week for females, would be a very low estimate for the average price of their board, respectively, throughout the State. In the country, there would not be this difference between males and females, but in the populous towns and cities it would probably be greater. That of females is purposely put rather low, because there were several towns where it was not included, by the returns, in the wages. On this basis of computation, the average wages of male teachers throughout the State is fifteen dollars and forty-four cents a month, exclusive of board, or at the rate of one hundred and eighty-five dollars and twenty-eight cents by the year; — and the average wages of female teachers, exclusive of board, is five dollars and thirty-eight cents a month, or at the rate of sixty-four dollars and fifty-six cents by the year.

In regard to moral instruction, the condition of our public schools presents a singular, and, to some extent at least, an alarming phenomenon. To prevent the school from being converted into an engine of religious proselytism; to debar successive teachers in the same school from successively inculcating hostile religious creeds, until the children in their simple-mindedness should be alienated, not only from creeds, but from religion itself; the statute of 1826 specially provided that no school-books should be used in any of the public schools, “calculated to favor any particular religious sect or tenet.” The language of the Revised Statutes is slightly altered, but the sense remains the same. Probably, no one would desire a repeal of this law while the danger impends which it was designed to repel. The consequence of the enactment, however, has been, that among the vast libraries of books, expository of the doctrines of revealed religion, none have been found, free from that advocacy of particular

“tenets” or “sects,” which includes them within the scope of the legal prohibition ; or, at least, no such books have been approved by committees, and introduced into the schools. Independently, therefore, of the immeasurable importance of moral teaching, in itself considered, this entire exclusion of religious teaching, though justifiable under the circumstances, enhances and magnifies, a thousand-fold, the indispensableness of moral instruction and training. Entirely to discard the inculcation of the great doctrines of morality and of natural theology has a vehement tendency to drive mankind into opposite extremes ; to make them devotees on one side, or profligates on the other ; each about equally regardless of the true constituents of human welfare. Against a tendency to these fatal extremes, the beautiful and sublime truths of ethics and of natural religion have a poising power. Hence it will be learnt with sorrow, that of the multiplicity of books used in our schools, only three have this object in view ; and these three are used in only *six* of the two thousand nine hundred and eighteen schools from which returns have been received.

I have adverted to this topic in this connection, not only on account of its intrinsic importance, but on account of its relationship to the one last considered. Under our present system, indeed, this is only a branch of the preceding topic. If children are not systematically instructed in the duties they now owe, as sons and daughters, as brothers and sisters, as school-fellows and associates ; in the duties also which they will so soon owe, when, emerging from parental restraint and becoming a part of the sovereignty of the State, they will be enrolled among the arbiters of a nation's destiny ; is not the importance immeasurably augmented, of employing teachers, who will, themselves, be a living lesson to their pupils,

of decorous behavior, of order, of magnanimity, of justice, of affection; and who, if they do not directly teach the principles, will still, by their example, transfuse and instil something of the sentiment of virtue? Engaged in the Common Schools of this State, there are now, out of the city of Boston, but few more than a hundred male teachers, who devote themselves to teaching as a regular employment or profession. The number of females is a little, though not materially, larger. Very few even of these have ever had any special training for their vocation. The rest are generally young persons, taken from agricultural or mechanical employments, which have no tendency to qualify them for the difficult station; or they are undergraduates of our colleges, some of whom, there is reason to suspect, think more of what they are to receive at the end of the stipulated term, than what they are to impart during its continuance. To the great majority of them all, however, I concede, because I sincerely believe it is their due, higher motives of action than those which govern men in the ordinary callings of life; yet still, are they not, inevitably, too inexperienced to understand and to act upon the idea, that the great secret of insuring a voluntary obedience to duty consists in a skilful preparation of motives beforehand? Can they be expected, as a body, to be able to present to their older pupils a visible scale, as it were, upon which the objects of life, so far forth as this world is concerned, are marked down, according to their relative values? Among the pagan Greeks, the men most venerated for their wisdom, their Platos and Socrates, were the educators of their youth. And after such teachers as we employ are introduced into the schools, they address themselves to the culture of the intellect mainly. The fact that children have moral natures and social affections, then in the most



rapid state of development, is scarcely recognized. One page of the daily manual teaches the power of commas; another, the spelling of words; another, the rules of cadence and emphasis; but the pages are missing which teach the laws of forbearance under injury, of sympathy with misfortune, of impartiality in our judgments of men, of love and fidelity to truth; of the ever-during relations of men, in the domestic circle, in the organized government, and of stranger to stranger. How can it be expected that such cultivation will scatter seeds, so that, in the language of Scripture, "*instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle-tree*"? If such be the general condition of the schools, is it a matter of surprise, that we see lads and young men thickly springing up in the midst of us, who startle at the mispronunciation of a word, as though they were personally injured, but can hear volleys of profanity, unmoved; who put on arrogant airs of superior breeding, or sneer with contempt, at a case of false spelling or grammar, but can witness spectacles of drunkenness in the streets with entire composure? Such elevation of the subordinate, such casting-down of the supreme, in the education of children, is incompatible with all that is worthy to be called the prosperity of their manhood. The moral universe is constructed upon principles, not admissive of welfare under such an administration of its laws. In such early habits, there is a gravitation and proclivity to ultimate downfall and ruin. If persevered in, the consummation of a people's destiny may still be a question of time, but it ceases to be one of certainty. To avert the catastrophe, we must look to a change in our own measures, not to any repeal or suspension of the ordinances of Nature. These, as they were originally framed in wisdom, need no amendment. Whoever wishes

for a change in effects without a corresponding change in causes, wishes for a violation of Nature's laws. He proposes, as a remedy for the folly of men, an abrogation of the wisdom of Providence.

One of the greatest and most exigent wants of our schools at the present time, is a book, portraying, with attractive illustration and with a simplicity adapted to the simplicity of childhood, the obligations arising from social relationships; making them stand out, with the altitude of mountains, above the level of the engrossments of life;—not a book written for the copy-right's sake, but one emanating from some comprehension of the benefits of supplying children, at an early age, with simple and elementary notions of right and wrong in feeling and in conduct, so that the appetites and passions, as they spring up in the mind, may, by a natural process, be conformed to the principles, instead of the principles being made to conform to the passions and appetites.

It is said, by a late writer on the present condition of France, to have been ascertained, after an examination of great extent and minuteness, that most crimes are perpetrated in those provinces where most of the inhabitants can read and write. Nor is this a mere general fact, but the ratio is preserved with mathematical exactness; the proportion of those who can read and write, directly representing the proportion of criminals, and conversely. Their morals have been neglected, and the cultivated intellect presents to the uncultivated feelings, not only a larger circle of temptations, but better instruments for their gratification.

It is thought by some, that the State cannot afford any advance upon the present salaries of teachers, which we have seen to be on an average, exclusive of board, fifteen dollars and forty-four cents per month for males, and five

dollars and thirty-eight cents for females. The valuation of the State, according to the census of 1830, was \$208,360,407.54. During the past season, it has been repeatedly stated, in several of the public papers, and, so far as I have seen, without contradiction or question, that it is now equal to three hundred millions. The amount raised by taxes the current year, for the support of Common Schools, in the towns heard from, is four hundred and sixty-five thousand two hundred and twenty-eight dollars and four cents, which, if we assume the correctness of the above estimate respecting the whole property in the State, is less than one mill and six-tenths of a mill on the dollar.

Would it not seem, as though the question were put, not in sobriety, but in derision, if it were asked, whether something more than one six-hundredth part of the welfare of the State might not come from the enlightenment of its intellect and the soundness of its morals? and yet this would, to some extent certainly, involve the question whether the State could afford any increase of its annual appropriations for schools.

There are other topics, connected with this subject, worthy of exposition, did time permit. I can enumerate but one or two of them in closing this report.

The law of 1836, respecting children employed in factories, is believed to have been already most salutary in its operation. I have undoubted authority for saying, that, in one place, four hundred children went to school, last winter, who never had been before, and whose attendance then was solely attributable to that law. Sufficient time has not yet elapsed (as the law took effect April 1, 1837) to determine whether there is a general disposition to comply with its requirements. So far as I have learned, the accounts hold out an encouraging prospect of compliance on the part of the owners and agents of manufactur-

ing establishments, notwithstanding attempts to evade it by some parents, who hold their children to be articles of property, and value them by no higher standard than the money they can earn.

From the best information I have been able to obtain, I am led to believe that there are not more than fifty towns in the State, where any thing worthy the name of apparatus is used in schools. With few exceptions, Holbrook's Common-School apparatus, and occasionally a globe, conclude the list. Thus the natural superiority of the eye over all the other senses, in quickness, in precision, in the vastness of its field of operations, in its power of penetrating into any interstices where light can go and come, and of perceiving, in their just collocations, the different parts of complex objects, is foregone. Children get dim and imperfect notions about many things, where, with visible illustrations, they might acquire living and perfect ones at a glance. This great defect will undoubtedly be, to a considerable extent, supplied by the law of April 12, 1837, which authorizes school districts to raise money by taxation, to be expended for the purchase of apparatus and Common-School Libraries, in sums not exceeding thirty dollars the first year, and ten for any succeeding year.

In every county where I have been, excepting two, county associations for the improvement of Common Schools have been formed. In the two excepted counties, there were teachers' associations previously existing. Measures were taken to make these associations auxiliary to the Board of Education in the general plan of State operations. These county associations will open a channel of communication in both directions, between the Board as a central body, and the several towns and school districts in the State; and through the Board, between

all the different parts of the State ; so that improvements, devised or discovered in any place, instead of being wholly lost, may be universally diffused, and sound views, upon this great subject, may be multiplied by the number of minds capable of understanding them. Several excellent addresses have already emanated from committees, appointed by these associations, or by the conventions which originated them.

If, in addition to these county associations, town associations could be formed, consisting of teachers, school-committee-men, and the friends of education generally, who should meet to discuss the relative merits of different modes of teaching, — thus discarding the worst, and improving even the best, — but little, perhaps nothing more, could be desired in the way of systematic organization. It should be a special duty of all the members of the town associations, to secure, as far as possible, a regular and punctual attendance of the children upon the schools.

Some means of obtaining more precise information respecting the number of scholars attending the public schools, and the regularity of that attendance, is most desirable. The practice of keeping registers in the schools, indispensable as it is to statistical accuracy, seems to be very often neglected. In preparing the abstract, evidence has been constantly occurring of the want of information, which such registers would have supplied. Sometimes, the committee resort to conjecture ; sometimes they frankly avow their ignorance of the desired fact ; and sometimes all the sums, set down in several columns of considerable length, have a common multiple, which is incompatible with the diversity of actual occurrences. On the whole, there is, undoubtedly, a very close approximation of truth ; and where particu-

lars are so numerous, errors on one side will often balance and cancel errors on the other; excepting where there is some standing bias, when the errors will all be on the gravitating side. Still exactness should be aimed at, as statistics are every day becoming more and more the basis of legislation and economical science. While the State, in the administration of its military functions, establishes a separate department, fills the statute-books with pages of minute regulations and formidable penalties, commissions various grades of officers, so that the fact of every missing gun-flint and priming-wire may be detected, transmitted, and recorded among its archives, it prescribes no means of ascertaining how many of its children are deserters from what should be the nurseries of intelligence and morality. This is mentioned here with no view of disparaging what is done, but only to contrast it with what is omitted.

Not a little inconvenience results from the fact, that school committees are elected at the annual town-meetings in the spring, and are obliged to make their returns in October following. Their returns, therefore, cover but half the time of their own continuance in office, while they cover half the time of the official existence of their predecessors. It is for the Legislature to say whether there be any good reason, why the time covered by these returns should not be coincident with their duration in office.

In closing this report, I wish to observe, that, should it ever fall under the notice, either of individuals or of classes, who may suspect that some imputation is cast upon them by any of its statements, I wish to assure them, that no word of it has been dictated by a feeling of unkindness to any one. The object of whatever has been said was to expose defects in a system so substantially

excellent, as to requite any labor for its reformation ; and all the remarks which may seem accusatory of persons connected with it have caused me more pain to write, than they can any one to read. To have spoken in universal commendation of the system and of its administrators would have been most grateful, could it have been, also, true ; but, in the discharge of a duty, respecting one of the most valuable and enduring of human interests, I have felt that it would be unworthy the sacred character of the cause, if, to purchase any temporary gratification for others or for myself, I could have sacrificed one particle of the permanent utility of truth.

# **SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT**

**ON THE**

**SUBJECT OF SCHOOLHOUSES.**

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**TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION.**

**GENTLEMEN:—**In the Report, which I lately submitted to you on the subject of our “Common Schools and other means of popular education,” I mentioned school-house architecture, as one of the cardinal points in the system, and I reserved the consideration of that topic for a special communication.

In my late tour of exploration, made into every county in the State, I personally examined or obtained exact and specific information, regarding the relative size, construction, and condition of about eight hundred schoolhouses; and, in various ways—principally by correspondence—I have obtained general information respecting, at least, a thousand more.

As long ago as 1832, it was said by the Board of Censors of the American Institute of Instruction, that “if we were called upon to name the most prominent defects in the schools of our country,—that which contributes most, directly and indirectly, to retard the progress of public education, and which most loudly calls for a prompt and thorough reform,—it would be the want of spacious and convenient schoolhouses.” As a general fact, I do not think the common, district schoolhouses are



better now than when the above remark was written. I have therefore thought, that I could, at this time, in no other way more efficiently subserve the interests of the cause in which we are engaged, than in bringing together, and presenting under one view, the most essential points respecting the structure and location of a class of buildings, which may be said to constitute the household of education.

I do not propose to describe a perfect model, and to urge a universal conformity. It is obvious that some difference in construction is necessary, according to the different kind of school to be kept. In each case, it must be considered, whether the schoolroom be that of an academy or of an infant school; whether it be in the city or in the country; for males or for females, or both; whether designed to accommodate many scholars, or only a few; or, whether the range of studies to be pursued is extensive, or elementary only. The essentials being understood, the plan can be modified for adaptation to each particular case.

The schoolhouses in the State have a few common characteristics. They are, almost universally, contracted in size; they are situated immediately on the road-side, and are without any proper means of ventilation. In most other respects, the greatest diversity prevails. The floors of some are horizontal; those of others rise in the form of an amphitheatre, on two, or sometimes on three sides, from an open area in the centre. On the horizontal floors the seats and desks are sometimes designed only for a single scholar; allowing the teacher room to approach on either side, and giving an opportunity to go out or into the seat, without disturbance of any one. In others, ten scholars are seated on one seat, and at one desk, so that the middle ones can neither go out nor in

without disturbing, at least, four of their neighbors. In others, again, long tables are prepared, at which the scholars sit face to face, like large companies at dinner. In others, the seats are arranged on the sides of the room, the walls of the house forming the backs of the seats, and the scholars, as they sit at the desks, facing inwards; while in others, the desks are attached to the walls, and the scholars face outwards. The form of schoolhouses is, with very few exceptions, that of a square or oblong. Some, however, are round, with an open circular area in the centre of the room, for the teacher's desk and a stove, with seats and desks around the wall, facing outwards, separated from each other by high partitions, which project some distance into the room, so that the scholars may be turned into these separate compartments, as into so many separate stalls. In no particular does chance seem to have had so much sway as in regard to light. In many, so much of the walls is occupied by windows, that there is but little difference between the intensity and the changes of light within and without the schoolroom; while in some others, there is but one small window on each of the three sides of the house, and none on the fourth. Without specifying further particulars, however, it seems clear that some plan may be devised, combining the substantial advantages and avoiding the principal defects of all.

In the Report above referred to, it was observed, that "when it is considered, that more than five-sixths of all the children in the State spend a considerable portion of the most impressible period of their lives in the schoolhouse, the general condition of those buildings and their influences upon the young stand forth, at once, as topics of prominence and magnitude. The construction of schoolhouses connects itself closely with the love of study,

with proficiency, health, anatomical formation, and length of life. These are great interests, and therefore suggest great duties. It is believed, that, in some important particulars, their structure can be improved, without the slightest additional expense; and that, in other respects, a small advance in cost would be returned a thousand-fold in the improvement of those habits, tastes, and sentiments of our children, which are so soon to be developed into public manners, institutions, and laws, and to become unchangeable history."

The subject of schoolhouse architecture will be best considered under distinct heads.

#### VENTILATION AND WARMING.

Ventilation and warming are considered together, because they may be easily made to co-operate with each other in the production of health and comfort. It seems generally to have been forgotten, that a room, designed to accommodate fifty, one hundred, and, in some cases, two hundred persons, should be differently constructed from one intended for a common family of eight or ten only. In no other particular is this difference so essential as in regard to ventilation. There is no such immediate, indispensable necessary of life as fresh air. A man may live for days, endure great hardships, and even perform great labors, without food, without drink, or without sleep; but deprive him of air for only one minute, and all power of thought is extinct; he becomes as incapable of any intellectual operation as a dead man, and in a few minutes more he is gone beyond resuscitation. Nor is this all;—but just in proportion as the stimulus of air is withheld, the whole system loses vigor. As the machinery in a water-mill slackens when the head of water is drawn down; as a locomotive loses speed if the

fire be not seasonably replenished ; just so do muscle, nerve, and faculty faint and expire, if a sufficiency of vital air be not supplied to the lungs. As this Report is designed to produce actual results for the benefit of our children ; and as it is said to be characteristic of our people, that they cannot be roused to action, until they see the reasons for it, nor restrained from action when they do, I shall proceed to state the facts, whether popular or scientific, which bear upon this important subject.

The common, or atmospheric, air, consists, mainly, of two ingredients, one only of which is endued by the Creator with the power of sustaining animal life. The same part of the air supports life and sustains combustion ; so that in wells or cellars, where a candle will go out, a man will die. The vital ingredient, which is called *oxygen*, constitutes only about twenty-one parts in a hundred of the air. The other principal ingredient, called *azote*, will not sustain life. This proportion is adapted by omniscient wisdom, with perfect exactness, to the necessities of the world. Were there any material diminution of the oxygen, other things remaining the same, every breathing thing would languish, and waste, and perish. Were there much more of it, it would stimulate the system, accelerating every bodily and mental operation, so that the most vigorous man would wear out in a few weeks or days. This will be readily understood, by all who have witnessed the effects of breathing exhilarating gas, which is nothing but this oxygen or vital portion of the air, sorted out and existing in a pure state. Besides, this oxygen is the supporter of combustion, and, were its quantity greatly increased, fire would hardly be extinguishable, even by water. But the vital and the non-vital parts of the air are wisely mingled in the exact proportions, best fitted for human utility and enjoyment ;

and all our duty is not to disturb these proportions. About four parts of the twenty-one of vital air are destroyed at every breath; so that, if one were to breathe the same air four or five times over, he would substantially exhaust the life-giving principle in it, and his bodily functions would convulse for a moment, and then stop. As the blood and the air meet each other in the lungs, not only is a part of the vital air destroyed, but a poisonous ingredient is generated. This poison constitutes about three parts in a hundred of the breath thrown out from the lungs. Nor is it a weak, slow poison, but one of fatal virulence and sudden action. If the poisonous parts be not regularly removed (and they can be removed only by inhaling fresh air), the blood absorbs them, and carries them back into the system. Just according to the quantity of poison forced back into the blood, follow the consequences of lassitude, faintness, or death. The poisonous parts are called carbonic acid. They are heavier than the common air, and as the lungs throw them out at the lips, their tendency is to fall towards the ground or the floor of a room, and if there were no currents of the air, they would do so. But the other parts of the air, being warmed in the lungs, and rarefied, are lighter than the common air, and the moment they pass from the lips, their tendency is to rise upward towards the sky. Were these different portions of the air, as they come from the lungs, of different colors, we should, if in a perfectly still atmosphere, see the stream divided, part of it falling and part ascending. A circulation of the air, however, produced out of doors by differences of temperature, and in our apartments by the motion of their occupants and by other causes, keeps the poisonous parts of the air, to some extent, mingled with the rest of it, and creates the necessity of occasionally

changing the whole. Though the different portions of the air have the same color to the bodily eye, yet in the eye of reason their qualities are diametrically opposite.

Although there is but the slightest interval between one act of breathing and another, yet, in a natural state of things, before we can draw a second breath, the air of the first is far beyond our reach, and never returns, until it has gone the circuit of nature and been renovated. Such are the silent and sublime operations, going on day and night, without intermission, all round the globe, for all the myriads of breathing creatures that inhabit it, without their notice or consciousness. But, perhaps some will suppose, that, in this way, the vital portion of the air, in process of time, will be wholly consumed or used up; or that the poisonous portion, thrown off from the lungs, will settle and accumulate upon the earth's surface, and rise around us, like a flood of water, so high as eventually to flow back into the lungs, and inflict death. All this may be done; not however in the course of nature, but only by suicidal or murderous contrivances. In the Black Hole of Calcutta, in the year 1756, one hundred and forty-six persons were confined to a room only eighteen feet square for ten hours; and although there was one aperture for the admission of air and light, one hundred and twenty-three had perished at the end of that time. Only twenty-three survived, and several of these were immediately seized with the typhus-fever. In the Dublin Hospital, during the four years preceding 1785, out of seven thousand six hundred and fifty children, two thousand nine hundred and forty-four died within a fortnight after their birth; that is, thirty-eight out of every hundred. The cause of this almost unexampled mortality was suspected by Dr. Clarke, the physician, who caused fresh air to be introduced by

means of pipes, and during the three following years, the deaths were only one hundred and sixty-five out of four thousand two hundred and forty-three, or less than four in a hundred; that is, a diminution in the proportion of deaths of more than thirty-four per cent. Hence it appears, that, through a deficiency of pure air, in one hospital, during the space of four years, there perished more than twenty-six hundred children. In Naples, Italy, there is a grotto, where carbonic acid issues from the earth, and flows along the bottom in a shallow stream. Dogs are kept by the guides who conduct travellers to see this natural curiosity, and, for a small fee, they thrust the noses of the dogs into the gas. The consequence is, that the dogs are immediately seized with convulsions, and, if not released, they die in five minutes. But let us not cry, *Shame!* too soon on those who are guilty of this sordidness and cruelty. We are repeating every day, though in rather a milder fashion, the same experiment, except that we use children instead of dogs.

But why, in process of time, it may still be asked, is not the vital principle of the air wholly exhausted, and the valleys and plains of the earth, at least, filled with the fatal one? Again, Divine Wisdom has met the exigency in a manner fitted to excite our admiration and wonder. The vegetable world requires for its growth the very substance which the animal world rejects as its death; and in its turn, all vegetable growth yields a portion of oxygen for the support of animal life. One flourishes upon that which is fatal to the other. Thus the equilibrium is for ever restored; or rather it is never disturbed. They exchange poison for aliment; death for life; and the elements of a healthful existence flow round in a circle for ever. The deadly poison thrown from the lungs of the inhabitants of our latitudes, in the

depths of winter, is borne in the great circuit of the atmosphere to the tropical regions, and is there converted into vegetable growth ; while the oxygen, exhaled in the processes of tropical vegetation, mounts the same car of the winds, and, in its appointed time, revisits the higher latitudes.\* Why should we violently invade this beautiful arrangement of Providence ?

There is another fact, impossible to be overlooked in considering this subject. Who can form any just conception of the quantity of air which has been created ? Science has demonstrated, that it is poured out between forty and fifty miles deep all round the globe. It was to prevent the necessity of our using it, *second-hand*, that it was given us by sky-fuls. Then, again, it is more liquid than water. It rushes into every nook and crevice, and fills every unoccupied place upon the earth's surface. All the powers of art fail in wholly excluding it from any given space. We cannot put our organs of breathing where some of it will not reach them. All we can do is to corrupt it, so that none but fatal or noxious air shall reach them. This we do. Now if the air were a product of human pains-taking ; if laborers sweated or slaves groaned to prepare it ; if it were transported by human toil from clime to clime, like articles of export and import, between foreign countries, at a risk of property and life ; if there were ever any dearth or scarcity of it ; if its whole mass could be monopolized, or were subject to accident or conquest, then economy might be commendable. But ours is a parsimony of the inexhaustible. We are prodigals of health, of which we have so little, and niggards of air, of which we have so much. In the State Lunatic Hospital at Worcester, there are eight hundred feet cubic measure to each apartment, for one patient

\* See Appendix B and C.



only. In the Prison at Charlestown, one hundred and seventy-one and a half cubic feet are allowed to each prisoner's cell. In addition to this, free ingress and egress of the air is allowed, by means of apertures and flues in the walls. In the Penitentiary, erected at Philadelphia a few years since, thirteen hundred cubic feet were allowed to each prisoner, solitarily confined ; while in some of our schoolrooms, less than forty cubic feet is allowed to a scholar, without any proper means of ventilation ; and in one case, a school has been constantly kept, for thirteen years, in a room which allows less than thirty feet of air to the average number of scholars now attending it ; and even this schoolroom, contracted as it is, is besieged by such offensive effluvia from without, that the windows are scarcely opened, even in summer.

I know of but three causes which can have led to these opprobrious results. In populous and crowded places, the price of land may have been thought to justify the use of small rooms for many scholars. But this can never have been even a pecuniary argument of any weight with a financial mind ; for the ultimate public expense of the sickness and poverty engendered would overbalance, a thousand-fold, the requisite original outlay. Besides, even if there were limit and constraint horizontally, there can have been none perpendicularly.

A motive of some efficacy may have been felt in the increased expense of erecting a house of adequate size. This is a tangible motive. But how feeble is it, when compared with the health and comfort of children, their love of study, and their consequent proficiency in it ! Should a case of necessity actually arise, where children were obliged to undergo some privation, far better would it be to stint them in their clothes, their food, or their fuel, than in their air. But in regard to schoolhouses

which are built at the public expense, such a necessity never can occur. Besides, these considerations affect size only, not ventilation.

An economy of the air, which has once been warmed, is the only remaining motive for using foul air. But if the warm air is saved, the foul air must be breathed; for they are the same. For several years past, high ceilings have been strenuously recommended as a compromise of the difficulty. But when the room is high, it is necessary, in the first place, to warm a much greater quantity of air than is required for breathing, and when it has all been once breathed, it becomes as necessary to remove it and supply its place with pure air as though the quantity had been small. Besides, pure air at a lower temperature will warm the human system more than impure air at a higher. In our climate, a moderately low ceiling is preferable to a high one, because, with such, a much larger portion of the air which we have been at the expense to heat can be used.

But it is believed, that, in the vast majority of cases, this habitual use of foul air is not the result of calculation, but of oversight. And it is worthy of especial attention, that many of our schoolrooms, where the greatest privation of healthful air is now suffered, were constructed originally with a large open fireplace, which was of itself a sufficient ventilator; and that afterwards close stoves were introduced to overcome the coldness of the rooms, without any reflection, that what was gained in warmth and comfort was lost in the purity of the atmosphere, and consequently in bodily health and mental vigor.

In regard to this most immediate of all the necessities of life, that arrangement would be perfect which should introduce the life-sustaining air just as fast as it should be wanted for breathing; and, when breathed, should carry

it off, not to be breathed again, until it should be renovated and purified in the laboratory of Nature. If one washes himself in running water, he will never dip up the same water a second time. So should it be with the air we respire. An arrangement producing this effect is perfectly practicable and easy. By examining a most valuable communication, placed at the end of this report, from Dr. Woodward, the Superintendent of the Lunatic Hospital at Worcester, it will appear, that fifty persons will consume the entire body of air in a room, thirty feet square and nine feet high, in about forty minutes. If, however, the room be perfectly tight, the air, once respired, will be partially mingled with the whole mass of air in the room, and will offer itself to be breathed again. What is wanted, therefore, is a current of fresh air flowing into the room, while a current of the respired air flows out of it; both to be equal to the quantity required for the occupants. Under such circumstances, if there be but little motion in the room, the poisonous part of the air will settle towards the floor as soon as it is cast from the lungs, while the other part of it, being raised almost to a blood-heat in the lungs, will rise to the ceiling. In the ceiling, therefore, should be an aperture for its escape. The carbonic acid will tend to flow out under the door, or when it is opened. If the ceiling be concave or dome-shaped, only one aperture will be necessary; — if horizontal, and the room be large, several may be required. The number will depend upon the manner in which the room is heated. If the house be of one story only, the apertures will open into the attic. On the upper side of the aperture let a trap-door be hung, to be raised by a cord, running over a pulley, and coming down into the room, or (which is more simple) by wires, after the manner of house-bells. This door should be prevented from

opening to a greater angle than eighty degrees, so that when the cord is loosened it will fall by its own weight, and close the orifice. The door will be opened, more or less, according to the temperature of the weather and the degree of wind prevailing without, so as always to carry off the impure air just as fast as it is fouled by the lungs. Any person, by stepping into the open air and inhaling it for half a minute, can, on returning into the room, determine the state of the air within it. If the apertures through the ceiling open into the attic, the air can be let off, either through fan-windows at the ends, or through sky-lights ; or an opening can be made into the chimney, and a flue carried up to its top. In the last case, the floor of the attic, immediately under the flue, should be plastered, or covered with something incombustible, to make it perfectly secure against cinders coming down through the flue. If the building be two stories high, the apertures for ventilation in the lower story, instead of being in the upper ceiling of the room, should be in the side walls, next the ceiling, and so ascend, by flues, through the walls of the second story until they open into the attic. Sliding dampers can be used, in order to open or close these lower orifices, so as to regulate the escape of air from the room. Where a schoolhouse two stories in height has been built in disregard of the laws of health and life, the lower room may be ventilated by making apertures in its upper ceiling, next to the walls of the room, and carrying up flues through the second story in tight boxes, attached to the walls, and opening into the attic through similar apertures in the upper ceiling of the second story. These boxes will appear, in the second story, to be only casings of posts or pilasters, and will not materially disfigure the room.

The best apparatus for expelling foul air from a room.

consists in the proper means of introducing a supply of fresh warm air. Undoubtedly, the best mode of warming a room is to have a cellar under it, and to place a furnace in the cellar. Some place of storing wood seems indispensable for every schoolhouse, and a cellar could ordinarily be dug and stoned as cheaply as a woodhouse could be built. I suppose, also, that a schoolhouse would be much less exposed to take fire from a furnace well set, than from a common fireplace or stove. But the great advantage of warming by a furnace is, that all parts of the room are kept at the same temperature. The air presses outward instead of inward, through every crack and crevice in door or window. No scholars are injured by being forced to sit in the vicinity of a stove or fireplace; nor is any part of the room encumbered by either. When the latter are used, many scholars, who sit in exposed situations, will spend half an hour a day, and often more, in going to the fire to warm themselves; and, in addition to those whose comfort requires them to go, idlers, from all sides of the house, will make it a rendezvous or halfway place, for visiting. With an unequal diffusion of heat in a school warmed by a stove, or fireplace, I believe it is always true, that diligent scholars will stay in their seats and suffer, while the lazy will go to the fire to drone. Some other advantages of setting a furnace in a cellar to warm a school are mentioned in the excellent communication of Dr. Woodward, above referred to. Feet can be warmed or dried at the orifices for admitting the heated air from a furnace, as well as at a stove. There may be two of these orifices, one for the boys and one for the girls. The setting of a furnace requires some skill and science. We often meet with a prejudice against furnaces, which belongs not to the furnaces themselves, but to the ignorance of those who set them. There seems to be no objection,

except it be that of appearance, against setting the furnace so high in the cellar, as that its brick or soapstone top shall be on a level with the floor of the room, and constitute a part of it.

If a common stove must be used for warming the room, then let it be enclosed in a case of sheet-iron, rising from the floor on three sides of the stove and bending over it; not, however, so as to *close* over its top, but leaving an opening in the case, greater or less, according to the size of the stove and of the room. The sides of the case should be two or three inches from the sides of the stove. The stove should stand on legs a few inches from the floor, and fresh air should be introduced from out of doors, and conducted under the stove in a tube or trough, which, as it rises around the stove, will be warmed, and enter the room through the opening in the case at the top. A slide in the tube or trough will regulate the quantity of air to be admitted. The sensations experienced in a room into which the external air is directly introduced, and warmed in its passage, belong to a class entirely distinct from those engendered by air warmed in the ordinary way. They will be grateful to the pupils, and will promote elasticity and vigor of mind. It would be well to place the stove directly in the current of air caused by opening the door.

The common expedient of letting down windows from the top, so that the noxious air may escape, and the vacuum be filled with the pure, accomplishes the object in a very imperfect, and, at the same time, an objectionable manner. If there be any wind abroad, or if there be a great difference in temperature between the external air and the air of the room, the former rushes in with great violence and mingles with the heated and corrupted air, so that, unless several roomfuls of air be admitted, a portion of

that which has been rendered unfit for use will still remain, while some that has been partially warmed will escape. But the greatest objection is, that the cold air drops like a shower-bath upon the scholars' heads;—a mode which all agree in pronouncing unhealthful, and sometimes dangerous.

Some schoolrooms are heated by a common close stove, the front part of which is placed in the wall, so that the door, where the stove is filled, is in an entry, while the body of the stove is in the schoolroom. It depends on other circumstances, whether this arrangement is beneficial or injurious. Where the air which keeps up the fire in the stove is taken from an entry, it passes through the funnel and chimney, and leaves the body of air in the room unchanged. This is no objection, provided the air in the room is changed otherwise. But if no other provision is made for changing the air in the room, the draught of the stove becomes important for that purpose. And although this may involve the evil of drawing in just as much air, through the crevices and openings, as is carried off through the stove, yet it is a less evil than that of stagnant air in the room. If, however, the room is warmed by introducing a current of air from without, which is heated in its passage, then the arrangement of feeding the stove in an entry is unobjectionable, and may, often, be very commodious.

If the room be so warmed that the air presses from within, outwards, the doors should be hung so as to open inwards; if, on the other hand, the room be warmed by a common stove or fireplace, the external air will press inwards, and therefore the doors should be hung so as to open outwards. Where the schoolroom has been so faultily constructed, that a current of air blows directly upon a row of scholars every time the door is opened, the door

should be rehung, or have a spring to prevent its being left open.

A thermometer should be kept in every schoolroom, and hung on the coolest side of it. The proper temperature should be determined by unchangeable laws ; not by the variable feelings or caprice of any individual. Without a thermometer, — if the teacher be habituated to live in the open air ; if he be healthy, vigorous, and young ; if he walk a mile or several miles to school ; and especially if he keep upon his feet during school-hours ; — the scholars will be drilled and scolded into a resignation to great suffering from cold. If, on the other hand, the teacher lead a sedentary life ; if his health be feeble ; if he step into the schoolroom from a neighboring door, he will, perhaps unconsciously, create an artificial summer about himself, and subject the children to a perilous transition in temperature, whenever they leave his tropical regions. In this way, a child's lungs may get a wound in early life, which neither Cuba nor the south of France can ever afterwards heal. A selfish or inconsiderate master will burn a whole roomful of children during the chill, and freeze them during the fever, of his own ague-fits. They must parch or congeal, as he shivers or glows.

It should be remembered, also, that even the thermometer ceases to be a guide, except in pure air. When pure air enters the lungs, it evolves heat. Its oxygen carries on the process (supposed to be combustion) necessary for that purpose. This keeps our bodies warm. It is the reason why the blood remains regularly at a temperature of ninety-eight degrees, though the air by which we are surrounded rises to that heat but a few times in a year. The air constantly supplies to the body, through the me-



dium of the lungs, the heat which it is constantly abstracting by contact with its surface. But it is only through the agency of the oxygen, or life-sustaining portion of the air, that this heat is supplied. A thermometer, however, is insensible to this difference. It will indicate the same degree of heat in azote, i.e., in that portion of the air which will not sustain life, as in oxygen; although a man immersed in azote at seventy or eighty degrees would die of cold, if he did not of suffocation. I reiterate the first position, therefore, that even a thermometer ceases to be a guide, except in pure air.

Ordinarily, we can undergo a change of a few degrees in temperature, without danger or serious inconvenience; but there is a limit, beyond which the change becomes perilous and even fatal. Suppose in a school, having a winter term of only four months, and consisting of but fifty scholars, one-quarter of an hour in a day, on an average, is lost for all purposes of study, in consequence of the too great heat or cold of the room; the aggregate loss, allowing six hours to a day, will be two hundred days, or more than eight months. And yet, in many of our schools, half the day, for all purposes of improvement, is, by this cause alone, substantially lost.

Every keeper of a greenhouse regulates its heat by a thermometer. The northern blasts which come down upon the blossoms of a farmer's orchard or garden chill him as much as them. When shall we apply the same measure of wisdom to the welfare of children as to that of fruits and vegetables? I am told by physicians, that from sixty-five to seventy degrees is a proper temperature for a room. Something, however, must depend upon the habits of the children. In cities, there is generally less exposure to cold than in the country; and factory children would suffer from cold, when those employed in the

outdoor occupations of agriculture would be comfortably warm.\*

\* We give below two letters, one from Col. JENKINS, an experienced architect in the City of Boston, the other from Dr. WOODWARD, the Superintendent of the State Lunatic Hospital at Worcester, on the subject of the construction of schoolhouses. The suggestions will be found very important. Though published in the 8th No. of our Journal, we deem them worthy of a re-insertion here.

*" Boston, Jan. 21, 1839.*

"Dear Sir, — Your favor of the 19th is just received. In answer to your question, 'whether it is a healthful way of finishing rooms, to plaster them upon a solid brick wall, without furring,' I think, in a word, that it is *not*.

"It is almost, perhaps quite, impossible that walls will not be penetrated by water, and conduct it through to the inner surface; some expedients have been adopted, in order to obviate this evil — as in prisons and hospitals, where it is unsafe to attach any finish to the walls, which could be removed by the inmates, and made the instruments of mischief in their hands. One method has been, to construct the walls with an interstice, or separation in the wall, between the outer and inner courses of the brick-work, when made of brick, and on the same principle when of stone. The objections to this are obvious. Unless the walls are made much thicker than otherwise necessary, their strength is materially lessened, and their liability to be penetrated by the weather proportionably increased. The outer and inner parts of the wall must be banded together by separate stones or bricks, which, in themselves, are conductors of moisture; the vacuum also is liable to be filled with rubbish or other nuisances. I suppose your inquiry has reference more especially to schoolrooms, and you will permit me to remark, that walls plastered upon the brick-work, without furring, are not only liable to dampness, but always cold, and, next to iron or marble, conductors of heat. Now, the youth in school are always allowed, and much enjoy and improve, recesses for play and exercise; they return to their studies, glowing with a brisk circulation of vital warmth, and it is clear, if in this state they come in contact with such a wall or any other powerful conductor, a sudden change is produced, and the subject is injured in health. Add to this, the uncomfortableness of such a wall: — it is also cheerless and unpleasant, and nothing of this kind should come in contact with the mental or physical sense of the student. Will you pardon me, sir, if I mention also, though aside from your inquiries, that the proportions and ventilation of schoolrooms are of vast moment to the well-being and improvement of the pupil? I think there is native taste in every well-balanced mind, though uneducated; whatever, therefore, is brought in

## SIZE.

The next thing in point of importance in regard to a schoolhouse is its dimensions. In almost every thing

constant contact with that of the learner, should be symmetrical and agreeable.

"The gas which is generated in assemblies of youth will arise and escape through attic ventilators, while that produced by adults is more dense, and of such a nature as to require apertures below to allow its escape. These last hints are gratuitous, but your efforts in the cause of Education will lead you to favor any auxiliary, however humble.

"I remain, sir, very respectfully, your ob't serv't,

"J. JENKINS."

"Worcester, Feb. 27, 1839.

"Dear Sir, — I received your favor of the 25th instant, in which you propose the inquiry, 'whether you think it a safe or proper mode of constructing brick buildings, to plaster the inside of the exterior walls, directly upon the bricks, or without furring.'

"Many persons object to brick houses, because they are damp; others think them colder than houses built of wood. The reason for both objections lies in the fact, that many houses are plastered on the brick walls. If the walls of a brick house are furred or built hollow, they are nearly or quite as dry as a house built of wood, and quite as warm.

"A brick wall, eight inches thick, is rarely so tight as to exclude the external air or the rain in a driving storm, and of course should never be plastered on the inside, but be furred so as to leave a space for air between the wall and plastering. All brick walls, but particularly thick ones, are generally colder than the atmosphere of the rooms, and will transmit the heat so rapidly as to form a condensation of the vapor of the atmosphere upon them, rendering them damp, and this moisture frequently accumulates in such quantity as to be visible in drops and currents upon the wall. Such houses can neither be comfortable nor healthful.

"If the walls of a house are not constructed so as to be hollow, or have a vacant space of an inch or two in the brick-work, they ought to be furred, lathed, and plastered, so as to leave a space for air between the brick and plastering, which makes the house both warmer and dryer than it can otherwise be made.

"Some years ago, I was frequently in a very handsome brick house, built at great expense, but the exterior walls were plastered on the brick. It had many occupants, all of whom concurred in the statement, that the house was damp, and that articles of clothing, in closets no way connected

heretofore written on this subject, the size of the school-room, in proportion to the number of scholars, has been a very leading topic. And certainly, if there be no special means provided for changing the air in the room, the importance of liberal dimensions cannot be exaggerated. But if, instead of forcing foul air back again and again into the children's lungs, we permit Nature to perform her gratuitous and beneficent labor, by carrying it beyond their reach, as soon as it has once been respired, then one main object of increasing the size of the room is already accomplished. The great end of a supply of healthful air being secured, the dimensions of the room are left to be determined by other considerations. These are, the convenient arrangement of the seats, so that the teacher can survey the whole school with a single look; so that each scholar can have an easy access to his own seat, without disturbing or being disturbed by any other; and so as to remove the temptations to communicate, to play, or to aggress.

In regard to the size of the rooms, it may be observed, generally, that in addition to the room requisite for seats and desks, as described below, there should be an open space all round the walls, at least two feet and a half in width, besides room for common recitations, and for the teacher's desk. Seats may be attached to the walls for the accommodation of visitors, or for the scholars, should it ever be desirable, for any purpose, to arrange them in a continuous line. Movable benches may be provided,

with the outer walls of the house, would become mouldy, and spoil, if not attended to frequently; and that all clothing and bedding in rooms not constantly occupied would be so damp as to be quite unsafe and unfit for use.

"Yours very truly and affectionately,

"SAMUEL B. WOODWARD."

— instead of seats fastened to the wall, — to be taken away, when not wanted for use, and so to leave that space entirely unoccupied. Joseph Lancaster, in making arrangements for great numbers of the children of the poor, where cheapness was a main object, allows nine feet area, on the floor, to each scholar. His rooms were fifteen or twenty feet high. If only fifteen feet high, an area of nine feet would give one hundred and thirty-five cubic feet of space to each scholar; and one hundred and thirty-five cubic feet in a room ten feet high would give to each scholar an area four feet in length and almost three feet and a half in width. Even at this rate, a family of six persons would have a room only about eight feet by ten.

#### DESKS, SEATS, &c.

It seems to be a very prevalent opinion, at the present day, amongst all professional teachers, that seats on a horizontal floor are preferable to those which rise on the sides or at the end of a room, or both, in the form of an amphitheatre. And it is obviously a great fault in the construction of a room, if, when a class is brought upon the floor to recite, the teacher is obliged to turn his back upon the school, when he looks at the class, or upon the class when he looks at the school. A level floor also increases the space for air; and as the room is warmed downwards, it makes the temperature more equable. The seats with desks should be arranged in parallel lines, lengthwise of the room, with aisles between, each seat to accommodate one scholar only. Although it would be better that they should be movable, yet as this cannot, perhaps, ordinarily be done for district schools, the front side of one seat may be the back of the next in the row. Eighteen inches is, perhaps, a suitable width for the aisles.

Each desk should be two feet long, and not less than one foot and six inches wide. A width of one foot and nine inches would be better. In some houses, the seats connected with single desks are one foot square, and are placed behind the middle of the desks ; in others the seats are one foot wide and as long as the desks. It may sometimes be desirable to place two scholars temporarily on the same seat, as for the purpose of reading from the same book. The former arrangement would make this impracticable. The children will sit more easily and more upright, if the back of the seats slope a little from them, at the shoulder-blades ; and also, if the seats themselves incline a little — the front part being a little the highest. The forward part of the desk should be level for about three or four inches. The residue should have a slight inclination. A slope of an inch and a half in a foot would, probably, be sufficient. It should not be so great, as that books and slates would slide off. For the deposit of books, and so forth, there may be a shelf under the desk, or the desk may be a box, with a cover, hung upon hinges for a lid. The first method supersedes the necessity of raising a lid, by which books, pencils, and so forth, are sometimes thrown upon the floor or upon the front neighbor. The shelf, however, is far less convenient, and the contents are liable to be perpetually dropped out. The box and lid, on the whole, seem much preferable, the sloping part of the cover to constitute the lid. For the security of the desks, locks and keys are sometimes used. But the keys will occasionally be lost, by accident ; and sometimes, by bad scholars, on purpose. Besides, what appalling images throng the mind, at the reflection, that the earliest associations of children in regard to the security of property amongst themselves, must be of locks and hiding-places, instead of honesty and justice ! The

board which makes the front of one seat and the back of the next should rise, perhaps a couple of inches, above the level of the horizontal part of the desk, to prevent things from sliding off forwards. Into this horizontal part of the desk, the inkstands may be let: so loosely, however, as to allow of their being taken out to be filled; and so deep, that their tops will be on a level with the desks. They may be covered, either with a metallic lid, resembling a butt hinge, to rise and fall; or, which is better, with a common slide, or with a flat circular piece of pewter, having a stem projecting on one side, like the stem of a watch, through which a nail or screw may be driven, not tightly, but so that the cover may be made to slide over or off the orifice of the inkstand, on the nail or screw, as a hinge.

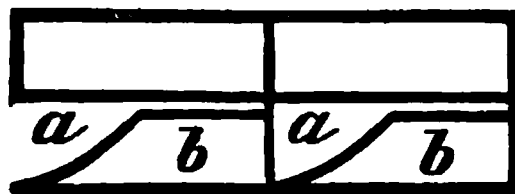
Instead of the form of desks, above described, I have seen some, constructed after the plan of Mr. Alcott's Prize Essay, in which the box or case for the books, and so forth, is in the front part of the desk; that is, in the horizontal and not the sloping part of the desk above described. They are made about eight inches in width, and deep enough to receive the largest atlases, slates, and writing-books, when placed edgewise, for which purpose, an inch or two on one side of the box is partitioned off. The lid is hung on hinges, as above described, and when shut forms a part of the desk.\*

Last year, a gentleman in Hartford, Conn., offered a handsome premium for the best form of a desk for schools. Several plans were submitted to the judges selected to award the premium. They decided in favor of a desk, designed to accommodate two scholars, upon one seat.

\* Mr. Alcott's Prize Essay may be found at the end of the second volume of the Lectures, published by the American Institute of Instruction, in 1831, and is a very valuable paper.

The desk was a tight box, without any lid, but having an oblong opening, *at each end*, large enough to admit books, slates, &c. In this way, whatever was put in or taken out of the desk would be exposed to the view of the teacher and scholars.

The edge of the desk and of the seat should be in the same perpendicular line. This will not allow the scholar to stand up in front of his seat ; but if the seats and desks are single, he can stand on one side of the seat. If the seats and desks are designed for two scholars, then the corner of each scholar's seat may be cut off, as in the representation below.



Here each scholar can stand up in the corner *a*, or sit upon the seat *b*.

In regard to the height of the seats, it is common to give exact measurements. But inflexible rules will never fit varying circumstances. Some schoolrooms are for females ; others for boys only. In factory villages, usually, a great portion of the scholars are young ; while, in one county in the State, great numbers of the males attending school, during the winter term, are more than sixteen years of age. To follow unvarying rules, therefore, would aggrieve as many as it would accommodate. But the principles to be observed are few, and capable of a definite exposition. A live child cannot be expected to sit still, unless he has a support to his back, and a firm resting-place for his feet. As a scholar sits upright in his seat, the knee-joint forming a right angle, and the feet being planted horizontally on the floor, no pressure whatever should come upon the thigh-bone where it crosses



the edge of the seat. If obliged to sit upon too high a seat, a foot-board or block should always be provided for the feet to rest upon. Children sometimes go to school at an age when many of their bones are almost as limber as a green with, when almost any one of the numerous joints in the body may be loosened or distorted. They go almost as early, as when the Chinese turn their children's feet into the shape of horses' hoofs; or when some tribes of Indians make their children's heads as square as a joiner's box. And, at this period of life, when portions of the bones are but little more than cartilage, and the muscles will stretch like sheep's leather, the question is, whether the seats shall be conformed to the children, or the children shall be deformed to the seats. I wish to fortify myself on this subject, by making a few extracts from a lecture on Physical Education, by that celebrated surgeon, Dr. John C. Warren. "When children are sent to school, care should be taken, that they are not confined too long. Children under fourteen should not be kept in school more than six or seven hours in a day; and this period should be shortened for females. It is expedient that it should be broken into many parts, so as to avoid a long confinement at one time. Young persons, however well disposed, cannot support a restriction to one place and one posture. Nature resists such restrictions; and if enforced, they are apt to create disgust with the means and the object. Thus children learn to hate studies, that might be rendered agreeable, and they take an aversion to instructors, who would otherwise be interesting to them.

"The postures they assume, while seated at their studies, are not indifferent. They should be frequently warned against the practice of maintaining the head and neck long in a stooping position, and the disposition to

it should be lessened by giving a proper elevation and slope to the desk, and the seat should have a support or back.

“The influence of an upright form and open breast has been sufficiently explained; and what may be done to acquire these qualities, is shown by many remarkable facts, one of which I will mention. For a great number of years, it has been the custom in France to give to young females of the earliest age, the habit of holding back the shoulders, and thus expanding the chest. From the observation of anatomists, lately made, it appears that the clavicle or collar bone is actually longer in females of the French nation, than in those of the English. The French have succeeded in the development of a part, in a way that adds to health and beauty, and increases a characteristic, that distinguishes the human being from the brute.

“While all of us are desirous of possessing the excellent qualities of strength, hardiness, and beauty, how defective are our own systems of education in the means of acquiring them!

“In the course of my observations, I have been able to satisfy myself, that about half the young females, brought up as they are at present, undergo some visible and obvious change of structure; that a considerable number are the subjects of great and permanent deviations; and that not a few entirely lose their health from the manner in which they are reared.

“I feel warranted in the assertion, that, of the well-educated females, within my sphere of experience, about *one-half are affected with some degree of distortion of spine.*

“The *lateral* distortion of the spine is almost wholly confined to females, and is scarcely ever found existing

in the other sex. The difference results from a difference of habits during the school education. The immediate cause of the lateral curve of the spine to the right is the elevation and action of the right arm in drawing and writing."

Much more might be quoted, apposite to this important subject. It seems only necessary to add, that nothing so essentially tends to aggravate these evils, as the want of a proper resting-place for the feet. Let any man try the experiment, and see how long he can sit in an upright posture, on a narrow bench or seat, without being able to reach the floor with his feet, and consequently with the whole weight of his feet, boots, and the lower parts of the limbs, acting with the power of a lever across the middle of the thigh-bones. Yet, to this position, hundreds of children in this State are regularly confined, month after month; and while condemned to this unnatural posture, Nature inflicts her punishments of insupportable uneasiness and distress on every joint and muscle if they do sit still, and the teacher inflicts his punishments if they do not. A gentleman, extensively known to the citizens of this State for the benevolence of his character, and the candor of his statements, who, for the last twenty years, has probably visited more of our Common Schools than any other person in the State, writes to me as follows: "I have no hesitation in repeating what I have often publicly declared, that, from the bad construction of our schoolhouses, there is more physical suffering endured by our children in them than by prisoners in our jails and prisons." \* The following is an extract of a letter, addressed to a "*Common-School Convention*," held at Northampton in February, 1837, by Dr. Joseph H. Flint, of that place: "For want of attention to the

\* The Rev. Gardiner B. Perry, of Bradford.

subject," (the construction of schoolhouses,) "I have the means of knowing, that there has been annually loss of life, destruction of health, and, in numberless instances, anatomical deformities, that render life hardly worth having. In the construction of schoolhouses, there are many considerations, involving the comfort, and health, and life, of the young," &c.

I am informed by surgeons and physicians, that a pupil, when writing, should face the writing-desk squarely. This position avoids all unequal lateral pressure upon the spinal column, and of course all unequal tension of the muscles on either side of it. It also interferes least with the free play of the thoracic viscera, which is a point of great importance. The edge of the desk should then be an inch or two above the bend of the elbow, as the arm hangs nearly by the side. Any slight want of exact adjustment can be corrected, by extending the elbow farther from, or bringing it nearer to, the body.

The height of the seats and desks should of course be graduated, to fit the different sizes of the scholars; the smallest scholars sitting nearest the teacher's desk.

The arrangement of seats without desks, for small scholars, when needed, is too obvious to require any explanation. Their proper position will depend upon the other arrangements of the schoolroom. Long benches, having separate chair-shaped seats, but with a continuous back, are sometimes used.

The place for hanging hats, bonnets, and so forth, will also depend upon the general construction of the house. It should be such as to encourage habits of neatness and order.

The instructor's desk should be upon a platform, raised so high as to give him a view of the persons of the pupils above their desks. When the school is not large, it

should be at the end of the room. It should overlook the play-ground. Cases for the deposit and preservation of the apparatus and library should be near the desk, except where a separate apartment is provided. A teacher without apparatus,—however numerous may be his books,—is like a mechanic with but half a set of tools.

The average number of scholars in the schools in Massachusetts is about fifty. When the school is large, there should be a separation of the older from the younger children, and the latter, at least, placed under the care of a female teacher. The opinion is almost universal, in this State, that female teaching for young children is, in every respect, superior to male. If the number of the older scholars be large, there should be a separate recitation-room, and a door and an entry for the entrance and accommodation of each sex.

In very large schools, it may be thought expedient to have desks, sufficiently long to accommodate six or more scholars, with chairs, fastened to the floor, for seats, and a space between the chairs and the next tier of desks, for passing in and out. In such cases, the desks may be placed longitudinally, and the teacher's platform for himself and assistants extend the whole length of the room, in front of them.

I now come to a subject, which I think of primary importance. It is the almost universal practice of teachers to call their classes out upon the floor for reading and recitation. If there were no other reason, the change of position it gives them is a sufficient one. The seats in schoolrooms are, almost without exception, so arranged, that these proceedings take place in full view of all the scholars; and they are often so, that when the teacher turns his face towards the class, he must turn his back

upon the school. The idle and disorderly seize upon such occasions to violate the rules of the school. This they can generally do with perfect impunity. They can screen themselves from observation, by moving the head so that an intermediate scholar shall intercept the teacher's view; or by holding up a book, slate, or atlas before themselves, and under such shield, can whisper, eat, or grimace. But the effect upon the attentive is worse than upon the idle; and its tendency is to turn the former into the latter. The eye is the quickest of all the senses, and the minds of children always yield instant obedience to it, and follow wherever it leads. Every one must have observed, that when a class is reciting in presence of a school, if any thing unusual or incongruous transpires, such as the falling of a book or slate, or the ludicrous pronunciation of a word, the attention of every scholar is broken off from his study. The blunder or stammering of a four-years-old child, learning letters, will strike every hand in the school off its work. While the senses, and especially the eye, are bringing vivid images to the mind, it is almost impossible for men, and quite so for children, to deny them access. Much of what the world admires as talent, is only a power of fixing attention upon an object, and of looking steadily at it until the whole of it is seen. The power of concentration is one of the most valuable of intellectual attainments, because it is the principal means of achieving any other; and the pupil, with but little positive knowledge, in whom this has become a habit of mind, has a far higher chance of success in any walk of life, than one with a thousand times the knowledge, but without the habit. This power is an acquired one as much as any other, and as susceptible as any other of improvement. But overtasking destroys it, just as overloading the limbs crushes, instead of

strengthening them. Reference must be had, therefore, to the ordinary powers of children's minds, or we shall have distraction instead of abstraction. Much fixedness of thought ought not to be expected from the giddiness and volatility of children. In rooms of the common construction, I do not believe that more than one-half of the time is available for study. Not only, therefore, ought the desire of strengthening this power to be inspired, but the arrangement of the room and the tactics of the school should be made to contribute, unconsciously to the children, to the same effect. Although the habits of the mind are the main thing to be regarded in education, yet it cannot be denied that one hour of concentrated attention on any subject is worth more than a week's listless hovering and floating around it. Hence, where there is no separate recitation-room, (which, however, every large school ought to have,) the area for that purpose should be behind the scholars who remain in their seats. The teacher can then take such a position at the end of the room, opposite his desk, as to command at once a view of the reciting class and the rest of the school. He will then see, without being seen. The scholars can interpose nothing between themselves and him. Every scholar would be convinced, by strict vigilance on the part of the teacher, during the first week of the school, that he had no power of violating rules without detection. They would, therefore, yield to the necessity of the case. The temptation would die with the opportunity to gratify it. The ear only of the scholars would be solicited to notice the voices behind them, while the stronger attraction of visible objects, the book, the slate, the map, would rivet eye and mind upon the subjects of study. This slight interruption in the rear, while the mind enjoyed such advantages for overcoming it, would increase its power

of continuous attention, and enable it, in after-life, to carry on processes of thought in the midst of conversation or other disturbing occurrences. Still, it is thought, that the teacher's desk should always face those of the scholars; so that when a class recites in the seats, when the whole school joins in any exercise, or when they are to be addressed, each party should be able to see the other face to face. The social principle will never, otherwise, flow freely.

#### LOCATION OF SCHOOLHOUSES.

All philosophers agree that external objects affect temper and character. If their influences are imperceptible, the results will be so much the surer, because imperceptible influences are never resisted. Because children cannot analyze and state in propositions the feelings, which outward circumstances breathe into their susceptible minds, it is no proof that they are not undergoing insensible changes. Everybody recognizes the silent influences of external nature, if exerted only for a few days, in the case of those religious sects who use the forest for a temple. Fatal contagions enter through the skin or lungs, without sending forward any herald. Subtile influences upon such delicate tissues as the nerves and brain are not seen in the process, but only in the result. But experience and reason enable us to foresee such consequences, and, foreseeing, to control them. Adults alone can perform such a duty. If they neglect it, the children must suffer.

It has been often objected to the people of our State, that they insist upon having the schoolhouse in the geographical centre of the district. And, other things being equal, surely it ought to be in the centre. But the house is erected for the children, and not for the acres; and

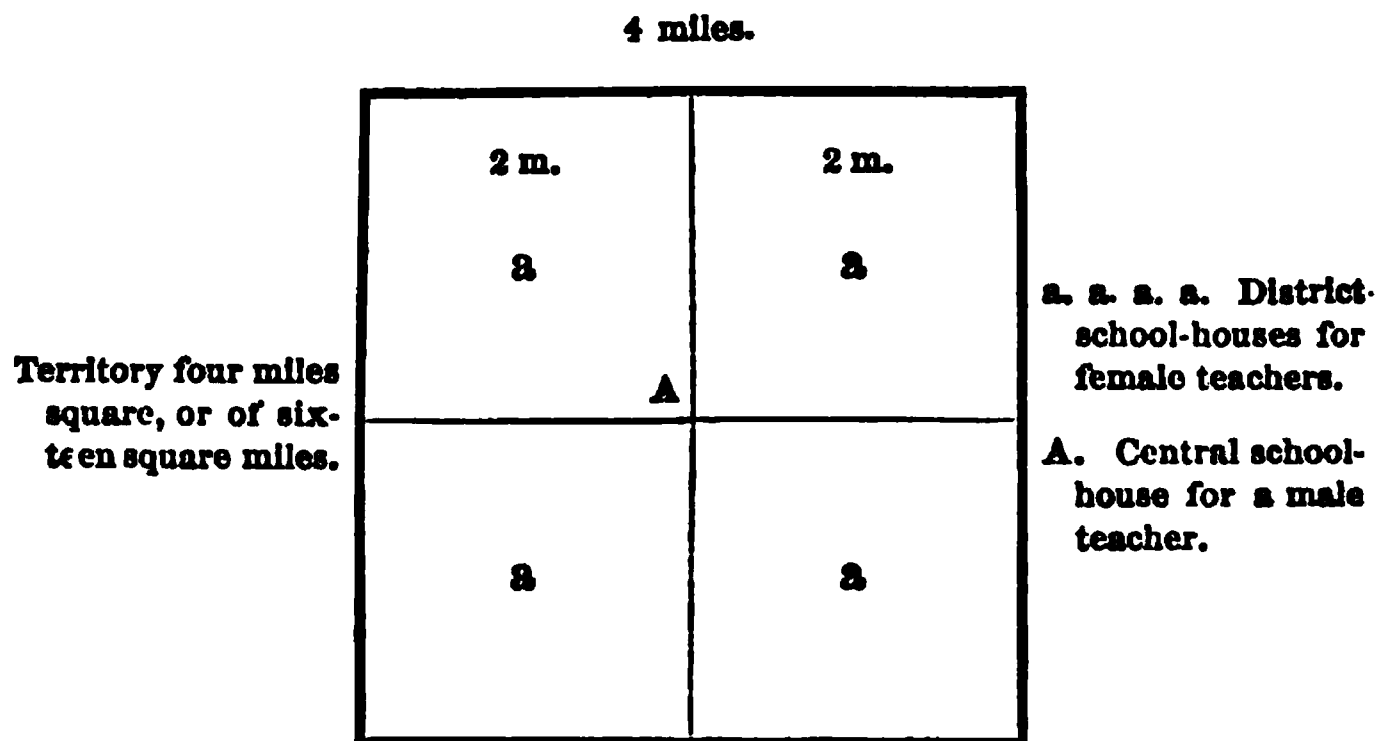


the inconvenience of going fifty or even eighty rods farther is not to be compared to the benefit of spending a whole day in a healthful, comfortable, pleasing spot, — one full of salutary influences upon the feelings and temper. Place a schoolhouse in a bleak and unsheltered situation, and the difficulty of attaining and preserving a proper degree of warmth is much increased ; put it upon a sandy plain, without shade or shelter from the sun, and the whole school is subjected to the evils of heat and dust ; plant it in low marshy grounds, and it exposes to colds or to more permanent diseases of the lungs, and impairs habits of cleanliness both in dress and person ; make one side of it the boundary of a public road, and the persons of the children are endangered by the travel, when out, and their attention, when in, called off the lesson by every passer-by ; place it on a little remnant or delta of land, where roads encircle it on all sides, without any place of seclusion from the public gaze, and the modesty of nature will be overlaid with habits of indecorum ; and a want of decency, enforced upon boys and girls, will become physical and moral turpitude in men and women. But build it where some sheltering hill or wood mitigates the inclemency of winter ; where a neighboring grove tempers the summer heat, furnishing cool and shady walks ; remove it a little from the public highway, and from buildings where noisy and clattering trades are carried on ; and, above all, rescue it from sound or sight of all resorts for license and dissipation, and a sensibility to beauty, a purity of mind, a sentiment of decency and propriety, will be developed and fostered, and the chances of elevated feelings and correct conduct in after-life will be increased manifold. Habits of mental order and propriety are best cherished amidst external order and propriety. It is a most beautiful trait in the

character of children, that they take the keenest delight in the simplest pleasures. Their desires do not tax commerce for its luxuries, nor exhaust wealth for its embellishments. Such pleasures as are imparted by the cheerful light and the quickening air, by the wayside flowers, the running stream, or the music of birds, are sufficient for the more gentle and pensive ; and the impetuous and exuberant of spirit only want a place to let off the redundant activity of their arms and legs. And how cheaply can these sources of gratification be purchased ! Sometimes a little of the spirit of compromise ; sometimes a little forgetfulness of strifes among the parents, engendered on other subjects, would secure to the children the double boon of utility and enjoyment. Yet how often are the unoffending children ground between the collisions of their parents !

It seems not unconnected with this subject to inquire, whether, in many places out of our cities, a plan may not be adopted to give greater efficiency to the means now devoted to common-school education. The population of many towns is so situated as conveniently to allow a gradation of the schools. For children under the age of eight or ten years, about a mile seems a proper limit, beyond which they should not be required to travel to school. On this supposition, one house, as centrally situated as circumstances will permit, would accommodate the population upon a territory of four square miles, or, which is the same thing, two miles square. But a child above that age can go two miles to school, or even rather more, without serious inconvenience. There are many persons, whose experience attests, that they never enjoyed better health, or made greater progress, than when they went two miles and a half or three miles, daily, to school. Supposing, however, the most remote scholars to live only at about the

distance of two miles from the school, one house will then accommodate all the older children upon a territory of about sixteen square miles, or four miles square. Under such an arrangement, while there were four schools in a territory of four miles square, i. e. sixteen square miles, for the younger children, there would be one central school for the older. Suppose there is \$600 to be divided amongst the inhabitants of this territory of sixteen square miles, or \$150 for each of the four districts. Suppose further, that the average wages for male teachers is \$25, and for female \$12.50, per month. If, according to the present system, four male teachers are employed for the winter term, and four female for the summer, each of the summer and winter schools may be kept four months. The money would then be exhausted ; i. e. four months summer, at \$12.50 = \$50, and four months winter, at \$25 = \$100 ; — both = \$150. But according to the plan suggested, the same money would pay for six months' summer school, instead of four, in each of the four districts, and for a male teacher's school eight months, at \$35 a month, instead of four months, at \$25 a month, and would then leave \$20 in the treasury.



By this plan, the great superiority of female over male training, for children under eight, ten, or twelve years of age, would be secured ; the larger scholars would be separated from the smaller, and thus the great diversity of studies and of classes in the same school, which now crumbles the teacher's time into dust, would be avoided ; the female schools would be lengthened one-half ; the length of the male schools would be doubled, and for the increased compensation, a teacher of fourfold qualifications could be employed. Undoubtedly, in many towns, upon the Cape or among the mountains, the course of the roads and the face of the territory would present insuperable obstacles to the full reduction of this scheme to practice. But it is as unquestionable, that in many others no physical impediments exist to its immediate adoption ; especially if we consider the legal power of different towns to unite portions of their territory for the joint maintenance of schools. We have not yet brought the power of united action to bear with half its force upon the end or the means of education. I think it will yet be found more emphatically true in this department of human action, than in any other, that adding individual means multiplies social power. If four districts cannot be united, three may. If the central point of the territory happen to be populous, a schoolhouse may be built, consisting of two rooms ; one for the large, the other for the small scholars ; both upon the same floor, or one above the other. It ought to be remarked, that where there are two schoolrooms under the same roof, care should be taken to have the walls well deafened, so that neither should ever be incommoded by any noises in the other.

The above enumeration of requisites in a schoolhouse is considered absolutely essential and indispensable. Just so far as they are disregarded, that nursery for the rear-

ing of vigorous, intelligent, and upright men, must fail of its object. If the children's lungs are fed only with noxious and corrupted air, which has once performed its office, and is, therefore, incapable of performing it again, without renovation, it may generate positive and incurable disease, and impair the energies both of body and mind for the residue of life. "In looking back upon the languor of *fifty years* of labor as a teacher," said the venerable Mr. Woodbridge, "reiterated with many a weary day, I attribute a great proportion of it to *mephitic air*; nor can I doubt that it has compelled *many worthy and promising teachers* to quit the employment. Neither can I doubt that it has been *the great cause* of their subsequent sickly habits and untimely decease." People, who shudder at a flesh-wound and a trickle of blood, will confine their children like convicts, and compel them, month after month, to breathe quantities of poison. It would less impair the mental and physical constitutions of our children, gradually to draw an ounce of blood from their veins, during the same length of time, than to send them to breathe, for six hours in a day, the lifeless and poisoned air of some of our schoolrooms. Let any man, who votes for confining children in small rooms and keeping them on stagnant air, try the experiment of breathing his own breath only four times over; and, if medical aid be not at hand, the children will never be endangered by his vote afterwards. Such darkening and benumbing of the mind accustoms it, in its first beginnings, to look at objects, as it were, through a haze, and to seize them with a feeble grasp, and robs it of the pleasure of seeing things in a bright light. Children always feel a keen delight in the consciousness of overcoming difficulties, and of fully comprehending any subject. This pleasure is the most legitimate of all rewards, and one which Nature always

pays down on the spot. But, instead of this, after filling their brains with bird-lime, we taunt or chastise them if they stick or get posed. If a child suffer from heat or cold, from a constrained or unnatural position ; if his attention be perpetually broken off by causes beyond his control ; it tends to make his temper fretful and irritable, and compels him to go back, again and again, to the beginning of his problem or exercise, like a traveller obliged to return home and commence his journey anew after having completed half its distance.

#### LIGHT.—WINDOWS.

The manner in which a schoolhouse is lighted is of no inconsiderable consequence. The additional cost of obeying philosophical principles is, at most, trivial. We ought also to remember, that the laws of Nature are never violated with impunity. In modern times the eye is much more used than it formerly was. Civilization has imposed multiplied and difficult labors upon that organ. Perhaps the eye gives fewer monitions of being overworked, than any other bodily power. It seems more to exhaust its strength, and then fail irrecoverably. If so, it should be protected by the foresight of reason. When provision is not made for admitting into a schoolroom a good deal more light than is ordinarily wanted, there will frequently be too little, and no remedy. Hence the windows should be such, as to furnish sufficient light at all times, and means should be provided for excluding any excess. Window-blinds and curtains, therefore, are essential. The transitions of light in the open air are very great ; but it is to be observed, that there is no out-of-door occupation which severely tasks the eye. But in a schoolroom, without blinds or curtains, when the sun is allowed to shine directly upon a child's head, book, or desk, the transition

is greater and more sudden than in the open air ; while, at the same time, the eye, being intensely engaged in looking at minute objects, has its pupil widely distended, so that the greatest quantity of light falls upon the optic nerve.

The following is extracted from a lecture, delivered by Dr. Edward Reynolds, of Boston, before the American Institute of Instruction, in 1833. "How much talent lies dormant by the morbidly sensitive eyesight, occasioned by inordinate and untimely use of the eyes ! This last-mentioned evil is increasing to a fearful amount among the young. Accurate inquiries have convinced me, that a large number of these individuals must go back to the schoolroom to find the source of their infirmities."

No persons, going with their eyes unprotected, ever cross the Andes, without losing their sight. The glare of light from the snow destroys it. Such facts admonish us to beware of exposing the eyes of the young, either to very intense light, or to great transitions, while engaged in looking at small letters, or in making fine marks on white paper. To say that the loss or impairing of sight is an evil too contingent and uncertain to demand precaution, is neither philosophical nor humane. Admit, that it is a contingent and uncertain evil, in regard to any particular individual so exposed ; as it is uncertain, which of the children, in Egypt, shall be blind men ; yet that some one out of a given number, subjected to the danger, shall be blind, is as certain as any law of Nature. Laws applicable to classes of men are just as infallible in their operation as those applicable to individuals, though we cannot foresee upon which of the individuals in the class the law is to be verified. In a multitude of cases, each tendency, however slight, will have its quota of the results. Hence the necessity of meeting tendencies with prevention.\*

\* See Appendix D.

In order that passing, out-door objects and events may not draw off the attention of the scholars, it is usually recommended to insert the windows so high, that such objects and events will be invisible in the schoolroom. It cannot, however, be denied, that this gives to the room a prison or cellar-like appearance. May not such interruptions be better avoided by selecting a retired situation, and by arranging the seats, so that the scholars shall sit facing from the road? Nor can there be any necessity for having the windows very high for this purpose. As scholars sit in their seats, the eyes of but few will be more than three feet and a half from the floor. This would allow of windows six feet deep in a room ten feet high. So, too, it would be a perfect security against the evil, if the lower sash, or the lowest part of it, were glazed with ground glass. The windows should be made so that the upper sash can be lowered. This may be very desirable in summer, independently of the considerations, above urged, in regard to ventilation.

#### YARDS OR PLAY-GROUNDS.

On this subject, I have never seen, nor am I able to prepare, any thing so judicious, and apposite to the condition of the districts in Massachusetts, as the following paragraphs, taken from a Report, published in 1833, "by order of the Directors of the Essex-County Teachers' Association."

"As the situation should be pleasant and healthful, so there should be sufficient space around the building. With the number who ordinarily attend these institutions, not less than a quarter of an acre should ever be thought of as a space for their accommodation; and this should be enclosed from the public highway, so as to secure it from cattle, that the children may have a safe and clean place



for exercise at recess and at other times. We believe it no uncommon thing for a district to meet with difficulty in procuring a place for a house ; for while most wish it to be near, they are unwilling to have it stand on a notch, taken out of their own field. This reluctance to accommodate the district may have been carried too far ; the actual may be less than the imagined evils. Yet it is not without foundation ; for in most instances, from the scanty and niggardly provision made by the district, the man knows that his own cultivated fields must and will be made the place of the scholars' recreation. We do not overstate, when we say, that more than half the inconveniences which persons thus experience in their property from the contiguity of a schoolhouse, arises from the insufficient provision made for the children by the district. While all the district may think that a neighbor is unaccommodating, because he is unwilling to let them have just land enough to set their house upon, the real truth is, that the smallness of the lot is the very thing which justifies his reluctance ; for whether he theorize or not on the subject, he well understands that he will have to afford accommodations, which the district are unwilling on their part to purchase. Every schoolhouse lot should be large enough for the rational exercise which the children ought to have, and will take. It would be well to have it large enough to contain some ornamental and fruit trees, with flower-borders, which we know children may be taught to cultivate and enjoy ; and by an attention to which their ideas of property, and common rights, and obligations, would become more distinct. By attention to what belonged to themselves, they would be kept from many of those wanton injuries too often done to the possessions of those near them.

“ In regard to space, no one can be ignorant of the gen-

eral practice. We believe it would be difficult, in this county, to find a score of these buildings, where the lot is as large as the most inexperienced on the subject would judge necessary.

“In by far the greater number of instances, there is no more ground than that which is occupied by the building; while many of them actually stand partly or wholly in the highway. The children, therefore, have no resort but to the public highway, or the private property of their neighbors, for amusement. Healthful and vigorous exercise is restrained; the modesty of nature is often outraged; and, not unfrequently, a permanent and extensive injury done to the finer and better feelings, which ought, at that age, to be cultivated and confirmed by the most careful attention, not only as a great security from sin, but as a most lovely ornament through life. Besides this, there being no place for pleasant exercise for the boys out of doors, the schoolroom, during the intermission at noon, becomes the place of noise and tumult, where, not from any real intention, but in the forgetfulness of general excitement, gentlemanly and lady-like feelings are turned into ridicule, and an attempt to behave in an orderly and becoming manner subjects the individual to no small degree of persecution. We have often witnessed such instances, and known those who refused to engage in these rude exercises forced out of the room, and kept out during the greater part of an intermission, because their example cast a damp upon a course of rude and boisterous conduct, in which they could not take a part. Whatever others may think, it is our belief, that this noise and tumult are, in a great measure, the natural overflowing of youthful buoyancy, which, were it allowed to spend itself in out-door amusements, would hardly ever betray itself improperly in the house.”

There is another topic of primary importance, the merits of which are so well developed in a portion of the Report above referred to, that I shall need no apology for transferring it to these pages. It regards

**THE DUTY OF INSTRUCTORS IN RELATION TO  
SCHOOLHOUSES.**

“ Though Instructors may, ordinarily, have no direct agency in erecting and repairing the buildings where they are employed to keep school, yet by a little carefulness, ingenuity, and enterprise, they can do much to avoid some of the evils connected with them. When about to open a school, they can look at the house, as a mechanic at his shop, and adapt their system to the building, and not carry into a house, ill adapted to its development, a system of operations, however speculatively just it may appear in their own minds. The buildings are already constructed, and of materials not over plastic, and often as incapable of accommodating a system got up in some other place, as the house of the Vicar of Wakefield was for the family painting. Instructors should make the most of what is comfortable and convenient, and remedy, as far as possible, what is bad. If the pupils are uncomfortably seated, they can allow them occasionally to change their seats, or alter their position, which, though attended with some inconvenience, cannot be compared with the evils growing out of pain and restlessness, and the effects which are likely to be produced upon the health, the disposition, morals, and progress in learning, from a long confinement in an uneasy position. Instructors can and ought to use their influence and authority to preserve the buildings from injuries, such as cutting the tables, loosening and splitting the seats, breaking the doors and windows, by which most houses of this class

are shamefully mutilated, and their inconveniences, great enough at first, are increased. The extent to which injuries of this kind are done, and the inconveniences arising from them in respect of writing-books and clothes, are great beyond what is ordinarily thought ; and, as it is possible in a considerable degree to prevent them, they should not be tolerated. So far as the scholars are concerned, they may arise from a mixture of causes ; thoughtlessness, idleness, a restless disposition, or real intent to do injury. But, whatever may be the cause, it argues an imperfection in the moral principle, which, were it in wholesome exercise, would teach them that it is equally iniquitous to damage public as private property. The practice we refer to is actual injustice, a real trespass, for which, in almost all other cases, the offender would be called to an account. And we must confess that it is matter of just surprise, that more efforts have not been made to prevent it. A high responsibility relative to this concern rests on the instructors. The power of preventing this lies principally with them. It is obvious then to remark, if they have much reason to complain for want of better accommodations, they have some reason to reform ; and in measuring out the blame which justly rests somewhere, to take a little portion to themselves. We are persuaded that schoolhouses will be more readily built and repaired, when instructors shall use more exertions to save them from the folly and indiscretion of children. The injuries complained of, we are persuaded, if not wholly, yet to a great extent, can be prevented ; and it is high time that parents and teachers should bring together their fixed and operative determination, to suffer them no longer. Separate from the inconveniences which scholars themselves experience from them, a licentious and irresponsible feeling, in regard to

public property, is encouraged. If the well-known loose sense of obligation in respect to public interests, and the wanton injuries which are so frequently done to institutions of a public nature of every description, so pre-eminently common throughout this country, do not spring up in the habits referred to, they are certainly most powerfully fostered by them; and there is great reason to apprehend, that a principle so loose in respect to public property, must extend itself by easy transitions to private. In every view, the practice is wrong, and the effect corrupting; and it is high time that the attention of the community was directed to it, the obligations of men on this subject more fully taught, and, when necessary, enforced in all our institutions of learning, from the Infant School to the Professional Hall, not excepting our Theological Seminaries, where, if in any place, we should expect regard would be paid to public rights, and the bestowments of private munificence; and we could wish the evil complained of, stopped here; but truth constrains us to say, that the tables and seats of the Bench and Bar in our court-houses, the pews, and even the pulpits, in our places of religious worship, bear evident marks, that neither the '*ermine* nor the *lawn*' is sufficient to restrain this most shameful, deforming, and mischievous practice.

"Teachers should take the *management* of the fire entirely under their own control; for though their own *feelings* may not be the thermometer of the room, yet, if they are at all qualified to teach, they must possess more discretion on the subject than those under them. They should see that the room is in a comfortable condition by the time the exercises commence. Many a half-day is nearly wasted, and sometimes, from the disorder consequent upon the state of things, worse than lost,

because, when the children collect, the room is so cold, that they cannot study, nor can they be still. Nothing short of the master's being in the house a half-hour before the school commences, can, ordinarily, secure the object referred to. It may be objected, that instructors are not employed to build fires. We do not ask them to do it; but we ask them to see that fires are seasonably built. And we must think those who can define so nicely the limits of their obligations, as to excuse themselves from this care, have not the spirit of high-minded and enterprising teachers, and that, however worthy they may be, and however well qualified for other employments, they should never offer themselves for that of school-keeping.

“Instructors should see, also, that the schoolroom be, in all its parts, kept in a clean and comfortable condition. Cleanliness is not ordinarily ranked so high, nor is the contrary habit ranked so low, in the scale of moral worth and sinful defilement, as they should be, nor do they, as we fear, enter so fully into the account when men are estimating their own moral state, or when others are estimating it for them, as they ought. We will not say, as a very able and careful observer of men once said, that he did not believe any person could be a true Christian, who was not becomingly neat in his person and in his business; yet we are free to say, that every additional year's intercourse with the world in moral and religious concerns, deepens the conviction, that cleanliness is inseparable from any considerable advancement in a religious life, and that where its requirements are disregarded, there is much reason to apprehend that other and important defects of a moral nature do, most probably, exist. Cleanliness in one's person, and the various occupations, is intimately connected with manly and upright conduct,

chaste and pure thoughts, and sensible comfort in any situation ; and, as a *service* exacted, or a *habit* established, would go far to secure good order and agreeable conduct in any school. We are persuaded that one of the most powerful helps towards good government, and consequent orderly conduct among the pupils, is overlooked, through inattention or ignorance, where this principle is not called in ; and where an exertion to establish a principle and habit of neatness has not been put forth, one of the strong bonds to a future worthy moral conduct is lost, and a most important and legitimate object of instruction and education neglected. Great exertions should be used to cultivate among the pupils a taste for cleanliness, decency, and elegance in all things, and their particular responsibility in respect to the proper state of the house, and all its outward connections. This is their *home*, for the good and decent state of which, their character is at stake, and their comfort involved. They should firmly and perseveringly resolve, that the school-room should be kept clean ; not simply swept, but often washed, and every day dusted. Without this attention, it is impossible their own persons, their clothes, or books, can be preserved in a decent and comfortable state. The room they should consider as their parlor, and those that occupy it, company to one another. The room must, therefore, always be in a visiting condition. And what should prevent this ? Cannot a number of young people, all of whom, it must be presumed, are trained to order and neatness at home, bring the principles of order and neatness into an apartment, where they are to spend so much time together, and where any one, who knows much of the business of common families, must know there is less excuse for any disorder or dirt, than there is in most of our houses ? We know it is practicable to have a

schoolroom kept in a comfortable condition, and that youth instructed and encouraged to do this, and having their attention sufficiently directed to it, will soon become interested in the subject, and manifest a commendable disposition to have things as they ought to be, and a willingness to make all the personal efforts which are required to accomplish it. And we are persuaded, that, when this is attempted, it will be found, perhaps, to the surprise of many, that from the less injury done to the clothes of scholars and to the books, as well as from the better conduct which will invariably ensue, many of the evils, connected with our Common Schools, would be removed.

“ It is a fact, susceptible of as perfect demonstration as any moral proposition, that filth and dirt, if they be in part the effect, are, at the same time, among the most efficient causes of corrupt morals and debased conduct. Gisborne, in one of his works, has a remark of this kind, (we do not pretend to quote his words,) that in a part of London, more young families, who, at setting out in life, promise well, are made corrupt, and led into wretched and destructive habits, from the unhappy location of houses, which renders all attempts to keep them in a pure and comfortable condition ineffectual, than from any other single cause. Ineffectual efforts to keep things neat lead to neglect, neglect to filthy habits, and filthy habits to low and degraded vice. If such be the operation of a want of neatness in families, and we apprehend the justness of the remark will find support in instances which must have fallen within the knowledge of every attentive observer, are there not reasons to fear, that the same effects will follow the same course in school? There can be no doubt that, in many instances, a sense of propriety is destroyed, in more, greatly weakened, by the



state of things in and about the houses of education. A disregard to this subject, too common among scholars, often settles down into a confirmed habit, and gradually spreads itself over the whole surface of action, and through life ; the individual becomes less interesting in his appearance, less agreeable in his manners, less honorable in his conduct, and less moral and upright in his principles.

“Instructors should also guard against the bad influence upon the dispositions and manners of scholars, which the inconveniences they experience are apt to produce. The pain and uneasiness which a child experiences from an uncomfortable situation in school, he will very likely associate with his books and studies, or with the instructor and regulations of school ; he may connect them with those who sit near him, and who may be just as uneasy as himself, and be ready to hate the whole and quarrel with all, because he feels pain, and cannot, or does not, rightly understand the occasion of it. The local situation of children in school has a most obvious bearing upon the conduct and temper. Place them a little out of the observation of the instructor, and they will play ; put them where they are crowded, or sit with inconvenience, and they will quarrel. ‘It has often been a subject of interest to me,’ says one of the committee, ‘when visiting schools, to observe the operations of local circumstances upon the mind and conduct of children ; and the more I have observed, the more importance am I constrained to attach to these things. In one house where I have many times called, I do not recollect ever passing a half-hour, without seeing contention among those placed in a particular part of the room, and play in another. I distinctly recollect the same thing in the seminary where I pursued my preparatory studies. It was

as obvious in the lecture-room in college. In the seminary which I had the care of for some years, it was so apparent that I often changed the situation of those who were unfavorably placed, to prevent the feelings and conduct likely to be produced from settling down into confirmed habits. For permanent bad effects may and have, in fact, grown out of these circumstances. Quarrels, also, which have sprung up between children, and which had no other legitimate cause than their being placed together in school, on uncomfortable seats, have led to a state of unkind feelings, and unfriendly conduct through life. The influence has sometimes extended beyond the individuals; families and neighborhoods have been drawn into the contention; and in not a few instances whole districts thrown into disorder, only because at first some little twig of humanity had become restless and quarrelsome, in consequence of his uneasy position in school.'

"But if the effect be confined to the individual, yet it may be sufficiently unhappy. Suppose, from one of the causes above named, the child acquire a habit of loose and foolish playfulness, or of restless discontent—suppose he acquire a disrelish for schools, his books, or unkind feelings towards his instructor, or his fellows—will there not be much personal loss, and is there no danger of future consequences—is there no danger that these feelings will go into future life, and the individual prove less comfortable to himself, and less comfortable to others? Youth is the season when the character is formed, and direction given to the feelings and the conduct. It is a matter of no small interest to the man himself, or those with whom he is to act in future life, that these be of a gentle and accommodating character.

"Since, therefore, from the construction of many of our schoolhouses, it is not possible for the scholars to be

altogether free from suffering, it is a subject well worthy the special attention of instructors, carefully to guard against the consequences which it is like to produce upon their temper and conduct. This may be done, in some degree, by allowing the children occasionally to change their situation, to rise and stand up a few minutes ; or, at convenient seasons, giving them a short additional recess. To remove, in some degree, the gloom and deformities of the house, and at the same time to draw off the attention from their bodily pains, scholars should be allowed to ornament it with greens and flowers, and other things of an innocent nature, attracting to the minds of youth. Agreeable objects originate agreeable feelings, and pleasant feelings lead to good conduct. We would also recommend to instructors to encourage the children, in places where there is the least prospect of security, to cultivate flower-borders upon the schoolhouse-grounds, and certainly in boxes set in the house. Should it be objected, that their attention would in this way be withdrawn from their books, we must reply, that we doubt the fact, and would in turn ask whether the feelings, the taste, and the understanding would not be most essentially improved by attention to the works of Nature, and efforts to bring to the highest perfection those things which a wise Providence, who knows by what means the character of man is to be formed, has made beautiful to the eye. Our own feelings have often been hurt, and our views of expediency entirely crossed, when we have seen, as we have on many occasions, a handsome branch, or beautiful flower, or well-arranged nosegay, torn in a censorious and ruthless manner from the hand of a child, or the place where his love for ornament and beauty had placed it. We would encourage the children to make the room of confinement as pleasant to them as they can,

consistently with other duties; and if at any time it be observed, that these things are gaining an undue influence over them, to check it, as any other practice not evil in itself, but only in excess, should be corrected. It should be done in such a manner, that the child should be left free to enjoy, as far as it is safe to enjoy, and feel, too, that he does it with the full approbation and goodwill of his instructor.

“There is one subject more to which we must be permitted to refer; one with which the morals of the young are intimately connected, one in which parents, instructors, and scholars should unite their efforts to produce a reform. There should be nothing in or about the schoolhouses calculated to defile the mind, corrupt the heart, or excite unholy and forbidden appetites; yet, considering the various character of those brought together in our public schools, and considering also how inventive are corrupt minds, in exhibiting openly the defilement which reigns within, we do not know but we must expect that schoolhouses, as well as other public buildings, and even fences, will continue to bear occasional marks both of lust and profaneness. But we must confess, that the general apathy which apparently exists on this subject does appear strange to us. It is an humbling fact, that in many of these houses, there are highly indecent, profane, and libidinous marks, images, and expressions, some of which are spread out in broad characters on the walls, where they unavoidably meet the eyes of all who come into the house, or, being on the outside, salute the traveller as he passes by, wounding the delicate and annoying the moral sensibilities of the heart; while there is still a much greater number, in smaller character, upon the tables and seats of the students, and even, in some instances, of the instructors, constantly before the eyes of those

who happen to occupy them. How contaminating these must be, no one can be entirely insensible. And yet how unalarmed, or, if not entirely unalarmed, how little is the mind of the community directed to the subject, and how little effort put forth to stay this fountain of corruption! Such things ought not to be; they can, to a considerable extent, be prevented. The community are not, therefore, altogether clear in this matter.

“When we regard the deleterious effect which the want of accommodation and other imperfections, in and about these buildings, must have upon the growth, health, and perfectness of the bodily system, upon the mental and moral powers, upon the tender and delicate feelings of the heart, we must suppose there is as pressing a call for the direct interference of the wise and benevolent, to produce an improvement, as there is for the efforts of the Prison Discipline Society, or for many of the benevolent exertions of the day. And we do most solemnly and affectionately call upon all, according to their situation in life, to direct their attention to the subject; for the bodies, the minds, the hearts of the young and rising generation require this. It is a service due to the present and future generation, — a service due to their bodies and souls.”

I will now bring this long statement to a close by the enumeration of a few further particulars, which could not well be arranged under any of the preceding heads; *and shall omit such things only as no CIVILIZED people can ever forget.*

Where the expense can be afforded, every schoolhouse should be provided with a bell. If not the only mode, it is probably the best one for insuring punctuality; and the importance of punctuality can hardly be overstated,

either as it regards the progress of the school collectively, or the habits of the individual pupils. If morals were to be divided into the greater and the less, the virtue of punctuality should be set down in the first class. Probably there are few districts, which would not obtain a full equivalent, every year, for the price of a bell, in the improved habits and increased progress of the children.

It is also very desirable to have a time-pièce placed in some part of the schoolroom, where it can be seen by all the scholars. It is both encouragement and relief to them. It has an effect upon pupils, just like that of milestones upon travellers. Men and children have a wonderful power of adapting themselves to circumstances; but, with all their flexibility, neither child nor man can ever adapt himself to a state of suspense or uncertainty. All the large schools in the city of Lowell are provided with a clock, which strikes after stated intervals. This is a signal for classes to take their places for recitation, and for reciting-classes to return to their seats.

Many schoolhouses in the country are situated a hundred rods or more from any dwelling-house. In all cases it is desirable, but in such cases it seems almost indispensable, to have a pump or well, where water for drink and so forth can be obtained. In the summer, children usually require drink once in half a day. A hundred rods is too far for them to run in a brief intermission, or for water conveniently to be carried; — to say nothing of the inconvenience to a neighbor of having his premises invaded year after year, and, perhaps, his gardens and fruit-trees thereby subjected to petty depredations.

No children or teacher ought ever to be blamed for having a mud-plastered floor, if mats and scrapers are not placed at the doors of the house.

If there be not a cellar for wood when that species

of fuel is used, a shed in which to house it is indispensable.

In the year 1831, the censors of the American Institute of Instruction submitted to that body a "Plan of a Village Schoolhouse." As the object of this Report is, not so much to present a model for universal adoption, as to explain the great principles which should be observed, whatever model may be selected, I have thought it might be acceptable to accompany this Report with the "Plan" which was submitted by the censors as above stated, together with all the material parts of their explanation of it. They are therefore appended. [See the 2d volume of the Lectures of the American Institute of Instruction, p. 285, et seq.]

It will be perceived, that the "Plan" of the censors exhibits a Doric portico in front of the house. Such an ornament would be highly creditable to the district which should supply it. It would be a visible and enduring manifestation of the interest they felt in the education of their children. And what citizen of Massachusetts would not feel an ingenuous and honorable pride, if, in whatever direction he should have occasion to travel through the State, he could go upon no highway, nor towards any point of the compass, without seeing, after every interval of three or four miles, a beautiful temple, planned according to some tasteful model in architecture, dedicated to the noble purpose of improving the rising generation, and bearing evidence, in all its outward aspects and circumstances, of fulfilling the sacred object of its erection? What external appearance could impress strangers from other States or Countries, as they passed through our borders, with such high and demonstrative proofs, that they were in the midst of a people, who, by forecasting the truest welfare of their children, meant nobly to seek

for honor in the character of their posterity, rather than meanly to be satisfied with that of their ancestors? · And how different would be the feelings of all the children towards the schools, and through the schools towards all other means of elevation and improvement, if, from their earliest days of observation, they were accustomed always to look at the schoolhouse, and to hear it spoken of, as among the most attractive objects in the neighborhood!

In the preceding remarks, I have suggested defects in the construction of our schoolhouses only for the purpose of more specifically pointing out improvements. I would not be understood as detracting from, but as attesting to, their usefulness, as they are. Although often injudiciously located, unsightly without, and uncomfortable within, yet, more than any thing else, they tend to convert the hope of the philanthropist into faith, and they fill him with a gratification a thousand times nobler and more rational than the sight of all the palaces in the Old World.





**SECOND ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SECRETARY**  
**OF THE**  
**BOARD OF EDUCATION.**

**1838.**



## REPORT FOR 1838.

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TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION.

GENTLEMEN: — I hereby respectfully submit some account of my proceedings during the last year, in discharging the duties of the office you have confided to me. I should deem it an encroachment upon the province of the Board to advert to such topics in the administration of the school (law), as are equally as well known to the Board as to myself; — such, for instance, as the measures they have taken for establishing Normal Schools, for causing school libraries to be prepared, and the designation of the form and time for making the School Returns. I shall, therefore, confine myself to such facts as have come more immediately within my own knowledge, and to the considerations suggested by them.

During the past season, after having given seasonable notice by sending circulars to the school committee of each town in the Commonwealth, I visited the fourteen counties in the State, and, at convenient and central places, have met such of the friends of Education as chose to attend. At a majority of these meetings I have been aided by the presence and co-operation of one or more of the members of the Board. Other distinguished citizens, who, for many years, have received the fullest

testimonials of the people's confidence, have been present, and have taken an active and most useful part in the proceedings. Except in the three counties of Hampden, Berkshire, and Essex, the conventions have been well attended by school committees, teachers, and other friends of Education. The time of the meetings has been occupied by statements, respecting the condition of the public schools, by discussions in regard to the processes of teaching, and by the delivery of one or more addresses.

It appeared from facts ascertained during the last part of the year 1837, and communicated by me to the Board in the report of Jan. 1, 1838, that the Common-school system of Massachusetts had fallen into a state of general unsoundness and debility; that a great majority of the schoolhouses were not only ill adapted to encourage mental effort, but, in many cases, were absolutely perilous to the health and symmetrical growth of the children; that the schools were under a sleepy supervision; that many of the most intelligent and wealthy of our citizens had become estranged from their welfare, and that the teachers of the schools, although, with very few exceptions, persons of estimable character and of great private worth, yet in the absence of all opportunities to qualify themselves for the performance of the most difficult and delicate task, which, in the arrangements of Providence, is committed to human hands, were, necessarily, and therefore without fault of their own, deeply and widely deficient in the two indispensable prerequisites for their office, viz., a knowledge of the human mind, as the subject of improvement; and a knowledge of the means best adapted wisely to unfold and direct its growing faculties. To expect that a system, animated only by a feeble principle of life, and that life in irregular action, could be restored at once to health and vigor, would be a

sure preparation for disappointment. It is now twenty years, since the absolute government of Prussia, under the impulse of self-preservation, entered upon the work of entirely remodelling their Common Schools, so as to give them a comprehensiveness and an efficacy which would embrace and educate every child in the kingdom. In this undertaking, high intelligence has been aided, at every step, by unlimited power; and yet the work is but just completed; — in some places and in some circumstances of detail, I believe, not yet completed. Their engine of reform is the command of the sovereign, enforced by penalties; ours is the intelligence of the people, stimulated by duty. Their plan has the advantage of efficiency and despatch, but it has this disadvantage, that what the ruler may decree to-day, his successor may revoke to-morrow; ours has the disadvantage of slowness in execution, but the compensatory advantage of permanency, when accomplished. Besides, if our schools are voluntarily advanced, through the intelligence of the people, the agents themselves will be benefited almost as much as the objects. These considerations ought to satisfy those persons who seem impatient of delay, and who think that any Board of Education could re-animate our system in one, or even in a few years.

Considering, then, the description of the means to be employed for raising our schools to a reasonable and practicable point of usefulness, it may be confidently stated, that the efforts, which have been made, in different places, have accomplished something already, and have given sure auguries of a speedier progression hereafter.

In my circuit this year, Nantucket was the first place visited. The town contains almost 10,000 inhabitants. When there, the previous season, there was but one set

of public schools for all the children. To them, only children over the age of six years were admitted, and no public provision existed for the education of those below. During the last year, the town has established two primary schools for small children, and also a school (as it is denominated in the statute) for the benefit of all the inhabitants of the town. To the last, pupils are admitted on passing an examination in the branches required to be taught in the middle or secondary schools. The organization, therefore, is now perfect. The small children are provided for, by themselves. This is an advantage, which can hardly be over-estimated. For the purpose of preserving order and silence in schools, composed of scholars of all ages, it becomes almost necessary to practise a rigor of restraint and a severity of discipline upon the small children, which is always injurious and often cruel. The youngest scholars are, constitutionally, most active. Their proportion of brain and nervous system, compared with the whole body, is much the greatest. Their restlessness does not proceed from volition, but from the involuntary impulses of nature. They vibrate at the slightest touch ; and they can no more help a responsive impulse at every sight and sound, than they can help seeing and hearing with open eyes and ears. What aggravates the difficulty is, that they have nothing to do. At a time when nature designs they shall be more active than at any other period of life, a stagnation of all the powers of mind and body is enforced. But while the heart beats and the blood flows, the signs of life cannot be wholly suppressed ; and therefore the steady working of nature's laws is sure to furnish the teacher with occasions for discipline. If it would be intolerably irksome for any of the large scholars to sit still for half a day, in a constrained posture, with hands

unoccupied, and eyes looking straight into vacancy, how much more intolerable is it for the small ones! Hence the importance of having such a gradation of schools, in every place where it is practicable, as has been lately established in Nantucket. Another invaluable advantage of having three grades of schools is, that while it diminishes, at least one-half, the number of classes in each school, it increases the number in each class, and thus allows the teacher to devote more time to the recitations and to the oral instruction of his enlarged classes. Another point, of great importance to the schools, was well illustrated in the change at Nantucket. When I was there in 1837, a private school was in operation, kept by one of the most accomplished instructors in the State, and sustained at great expense to its patrons. When the arrangement, above referred to, was made, this gentleman was employed by the town to keep the town school. The private school was, of course, given up; but he carried with him, into the town school, most of his former pupils. And he now educates many others, who could not afford the expense of the private school. Although, in such cases, the compensation of the teacher may not be quite as great, nominally, yet it will probably be worth as much; as he will receive it directly from the town, in regular instalments, and will have none of the trouble of collecting bills.

Within the last year, also, every schoolhouse in Nantucket has been provided with a good ventilator and with new and comfortable seats. This leaves little to be desired in that town, in regard to the places where the processes of education are carried on. Competent teachers, fidelity in the committee, suitable school-books, libraries and a good apparatus, and bringing *all* the children



within the beneficent influences of the school, will complete the work.

For the town school, an extensive and valuable apparatus has been provided, and also some of a less costly description for the primary schools. To accomplish these praiseworthy purposes, the town, last year, almost doubled its former appropriation.

Another highly gratifying indication of increased attention to the welfare of the schools has been given by the city of Salem. A year ago, the schoolhouses in that city were without ventilation, and many of them with such seats as excited vivid ideas of corporal punishment, and almost prompted one to ask the children for what offence they had been committed. At an expense of about two thousand dollars, the seats in all the schoolhouses, except one, have been reconstructed, and provisions for ventilation have been made. I am told, that the effect in the quiet, attention and proficiency of the pupils, was immediately manifested.

In many other places, improvements of the same kind have been made, though to a less extent and in a part only of the houses. It would be a great mistake, however, to suppose, that nothing remains to be done in this important department of the system of public instruction. The cases mentioned are the slightest exceptions, compared with the generality of the neglect. The urgent reasons for making the report on schoolhouses, the last year, still continue. In the important point of ventilation, so essential to the health, composure, and mental elasticity of the pupils, most of the houses remain without change; except, indeed, that very undesirable change which has been wrought by time and the elements;—or such change as has been effected by stripping off the external covering of the house, on some emergency for fuel.

The children must continue to breathe poisonous air, and to sit upon seats, threatening structural derangement, until parents become satisfied that a little money may well be expended to secure to their offspring the blessings of sound health, a good conformation, and a strong, quick-working mind.

A highly respectable physician, who, for several years, has attended to the actual results of bad internal arrangements and bad locations for schoolhouses upon the health of the pupils, took measures, during the past summer, to ascertain with exactness the relative amount of sickness suffered by the children, in a given period of time, in two annual schools. The schools were selected on account of their proximity, being but a short distance from each other; they consisted of very nearly the same number of children, belonging to families in the same condition of life, and no *general* physical causes were known to exist, which should have distinguished them from each other, in regard to the health of the pupils. But one house was dry and well ventilated; the other damp, and so situated as to render ventilation impracticable. In the former, during a period of forty-five days, five scholars were absent, from sickness, to the amount in the whole of twenty days. In the latter, during the same period of time and for the same cause, nineteen children were absent, to an amount in the whole of one hundred and forty-five days; — that is almost four times the number of children, and more than seven times the amount of sickness; and the appearances of the children not thus detained by sickness, indicated a marked difference in their condition as to health. On such a subject, where all the causes in operation may not be known, it would be unphilosophical to draw general conclusions from a particular observation. No reason, however, can be di-

vined, why this single result should not fairly represent the average of any given number of years. Similar results for successive years must satisfy any one, respecting the true cause of such calamities ; if, indeed, any one can remain sceptical in regard to the connection between good health and pure air.

The committee who take charge of the Primary Schools in the city of Boston, established, in the month of September last, a "Model School." To this school it is intended to devote an unusual share of attention. It is under the immediate supervision of gentlemen, intelligent and highly interested in its success. Their object is to select the best books, to learn, as far as possible, the true periods of alternation between study and exercise for young children, and to improve upon existing processes for moral and intellectual training. When their plans are somewhat matured by observation and experience, it is their intention to bring the teachers of the other Primary Schools (of which there are more than eighty in the city) in regular succession into this school, to familiarize them with whatever, upon experiment, shall be found to succeed well. Although it cannot be doubted, that this enterprise, under the judicious management of the committee, will prove very beneficial, yet it is hardly rational to anticipate, that it will supersede the necessity of a Normal School for the city.

I cannot doubt, that the Board will hear, with lively gratification, other evidence of an increased interest in this subject. Considering how inadequate to the wants of the whole community a county meeting—annual only—on the subject of Education, must necessarily be, several of the county conventions appointed large and most respectable committees to prepare and deliver, or cause to be prepared and delivered, a lecture in the dif-

ferent towns of the respective counties ; — or, where towns were large, then in different places in the same town. In pursuance of this excellent plan, such lectures have already been delivered, or lecturers are now engaged in delivering them, in the counties of Nantucket, Hampden, Hampshire, Franklin, Worcester, and to some extent in Essex.

During the last summer, too, a few gentlemen in the city of Boston adopted measures to procure the delivery of a course of weekly lectures for the benefit of teachers in the city. This course commenced about the middle of October last, and still continues. Engaged, in country and city, in this voluntary and gratuitous labor, are gentlemen, who have been, or are, members of the State and National Legislatures, counsellors at law, physicians, clergymen of all denominations, experienced and long-approved teachers, and some of the most popular writers in the State. All these intelligent and forecasting men, who see that future consequences can alone be regulated by attention to present causes, are profoundly convinced, that unless juvenile feelings, in this State and Country, are assiduously trained to an observance of law and a reverence for justice, it will be impossible to restrain adult passions from individual debasement and public commotion. The course of a stream, which a thousand men cannot obstruct, as it flows into the ocean, may be turned by a child at the fountain. Above, it will yield to the guidance of a hand ; below, its flood will sweep works and workmen away.

There are other indications, that public opinion on this subject is advancing in the right direction. More committees are inquiring into the qualifications of candidates for teaching, instead of taking such qualifications for granted. Persons who had taught school a dozen win-

ters have been set aside for incompetency in the elementary branches. The law, requiring committees to visit the schools, has been better observed than ever before; and teachers are realizing the benefit of such visitations, in the encouragement and stimulus they have supplied to the pupils. Many teachers are more justly appreciating the true elevation and responsibility of their vocation; and are animated by those high motives, whose prerogative it is to convert toil into pleasure.

On the reverse side of this picture, however, it is my duty to present, that of the twenty-nine rich and populous towns, bound by law to keep a school, at least ten months in each year, "for the benefit of all the inhabitants of the town," and which were reported, last year, as violating this law, by non-compliance, only two, viz. Nantucket and Taunton, have since established the schools required. It will be recollected, that this class of towns takes precedence of almost all the others in wealth; that they expend a far less proportion of money, per scholar, for the support of public schools, than the poorer and more sparsely populated towns, while, at the same time, they expend a far greater proportion of money for private schools. At the rate of two in a year, it will take about fifteen years for all the towns in this class to comply with the law;—a length of probation, it is to be feared, which will tend to harden rather than reform the delinquents.

Sufficient time has not yet elapsed to allow the practical results of last winter's legislation to be developed. The law for the compensation of school committees was not enacted, until after the committees for the current year had been elected. The reasons, which, in former years, had deterred so many competent men from accepting that meritorious office, still existed. The ensuing

annual elections will show how far the public will consent, that any man, incompetent for, or heartless in, the performance of this responsible duty, shall be intrusted with it and receive its compensation. Nor has the time yet arrived, at which all school committees are to make to their respective towns a report, "designating particular improvements and defects in the methods or means of education, and stating such facts and suggestions in relation thereto, as, in their opinion, will best promote the interests and increase the usefulness of the schools." Great good will unquestionably result from each of these provisions.

The "Register," prescribed by the law of last winter, "to be faithfully kept, in all the town and district schools in the Commonwealth," has been almost universally (one or two places only, so far as I have learned, undertaking to absolve themselves from a compliance with the law) introduced into the schools, with excellent effect. Skilful teachers find it a valuable auxiliary in securing greater regularity in the attendance of the scholars. By the Report of last year, it appeared that "a portion of the children, dependent wholly upon the common schools, absented themselves from the winter school, either permanently or occasionally, equal to a permanent absence of about one-third part of their whole number; and a portion absented themselves from the summer schools, either permanently or occasionally, equal to a permanent absence of considerably more than two-fifths of their whole number." Thus after all the labor and expense of establishing, maintaining, and supervising the schools have been incurred, after the schools have been brought to the very doors of the children, the school itself is made to suffer in all its departments by the inconstant attendance of the children, and the children suffer, in habits

and character, from inconstant attendance upon the school. Whatever diminishes this evil is cheaply bought, though at much cost. The keeping of a daily Register is also the only means by which the committees can be enabled to make accurate, instead of conjectural, returns, for the Annual Abstracts. The "Register" and the "Annual Abstract" are so far parts of a whole, that both should be continued or both abolished. The Abstracts are prepared as statistics for legislative action and economical science. If true, they will evince philosophical principles to be the basis of wise measures. But if false, they lead to practical errors, with scientific certainty; and they annul the chance which ignorance enjoys of being sometimes right by accident or mistake.

The Board are already aware that the "*Form*" of the Register, prepared this year, was sent out in single sheets, and for one year only, that its fitness might be tested; and that "in order to establish a more perfect and permanent Register, all persons were invited to suggest improvements." In the circulars sent to the school committees, this invitation was repeated. Verbally or in writing, I have received a variety of suggestions for modifying its form. Some of these suggestions are diametrically opposite to each other, even where they come from towns lying side by side, and whose general circumstances (except in the amount of attention bestowed upon their schools) are similar. The number of towns in the country is precisely equal, which, on one side, declare it to be too complicated and particular; and, on the other, suggest, as improvements, the addition of a number of new items. I mention these particulars, that the towns may know how impossible is a conformity to views so conflicting. As some teachers and school committees do not seem to be aware of the advantages of keeping so

full a Register as has been proposed, perhaps it may be expedient to prepare a Form, embracing those facts only, of which a record should be kept, in every school; and then to leave it to those who more fully appreciate its uses, to keep such a supplementary Register as they may think best.

The report on Schoolhouses, made by me to the Board in March last, detailing, among other things, a plan for a union of school districts and a gradation of schools, in places where the compactness of the population would allow, was followed by the act of the Legislature of April 25th, authorizing a union of school districts for the important purposes specified. A few towns have already acted upon that plan, and the public mind is earnestly called to it by the friends of education in other places. Wherever it can be adopted, it will tend to diminish the evils and to increase the efficiency of our educational system.

But were all the territory of the State judiciously divided into districts; were there a just gradation in the schools; were every schoolhouse good; had every school the best teacher that could be found, and the guidance and encouragement of the most wise and assiduous school committee; — still, all these would be only preliminary steps in the numerous and complicated processes of Education. The true medium in the government of schools, between austere demeanor and severity on the one hand, and, on the other, a facile temper, yielding to every pressure and just according to the pressure; — the great questions of rewards and punishments, whose influence spreads out over such wide tracts of feeling and character in after-life; — the selection of motives to enkindle the ardor of children in their studies, together with the precedence of these motives in regard to each other, that



is, whether the minds of children should be forever turned outwards to the worldly advantages of wealth, office, rank, display, as incitements to duty; or inwards, towards the perception of right and wrong in their own hearts, and to the noiseless, boundless rewards which nature gives for conscientious conduct, in spite of the laws, or power, or hate of men; — the one course, setting the applause of the world before rectitude, the other reversing their position: — and in regard to processes, more intellectual in their character; — such as the succession of studies best tending to cultivate the mental powers, in the order of their natural development; — the question of a more or less rapid alternation from one study to another; — the degrees in which either the instruction or government of a school should be modified so as to be adapted to peculiarities of individual character; — all these, and many more points, would remain to be settled, before the outlines were filled up of any thing worthy to be called a philosophical plan of Education. \ Surveying the subject, therefore, in the extent and diversity of its parts, the only practicable and useful course seemed to be, to select some particular topic, and, as far as possible, to collect facts, educe principles, and offer hints for practice. \ Science must grow out of observation, art out of science.

From the earliest observations made on visiting schools, (and such as I have visited were, probably, above the average of schools in the State,) I have been impressed with the obvious want of intelligence, in the reading-classes, respecting the subject-matter of the lessons. With some exceptions, I regret to say, that the eyes, features, and motions of the readers have indicated only bodily sensations, not mental activity; while the volume of voice emitted has too closely resembled those mechanical contrivances for the transmission of fluids, which, with admi-

rable precision, discharge equal quantities in equal times. At the same time, I was sure, that, had the subject-matter of the reading-lesson been understood, it would have opened a fountain of pleasurable emotions within, whose streams would have flowed out through every channel of expression. And, on examination, I have often found that the black and white page of the book was the outer boundary of the reader's thoughts, and a barrier to arrest their progress, instead of being a vehicle to carry them onward or upward into whatever region the author might have expatiated. When the pupils were directed to the subject-matter of the reading-lesson, to the orderly unfolding of its parts, as branches proceeding from a common trunk, I have found them committing mistakes which, though ludicrous as facts, were most lamentable as indications.

Deeming the mode, and the degree of success found to attend it, of teaching our children the orthography and significance of their mother-tongue, to be the most important question which could be put in regard to their intellectual culture, I determined to make those points the main objects of inquiry in my annual visit into the different counties. For distinctness' sake, I proposed, among others, the two following questions to the school committees of the several towns in the State.

1st. *"Are scholars in your schools kept in spelling classes from the time of their earliest combination of letters, up to the time of their leaving school; or what is the course ordinarily pursued in regard to teaching orthography, and how long is it continued?"*

2d. *"Are there defects in teaching scholars to read? This inquiry is not made in regard to the pronunciation of words and the modulation of the voice. But do the scholars fail to understand the meaning of the words they*

*read? Do they fail to master the sense of the reading-lessons? Is there a presence in the minds of the scholars, when reading, of the ideas and feelings intended to be conveyed and excited by the author? "*

In answer to another question, not here quoted, relative to the ages within which children attend our public schools, I have learnt, that *exclusive* regulations, founded on age, exist in but very few towns — probably in not more than fifteen or twenty — in the State. And although the great majority of the children in the schools are between the ages of four and sixteen, yet in almost all the towns they are allowed to attend both earlier and later, and they are found from three, and sometimes from two years of age, up to twenty-one years, very frequently, and sometimes to twenty-four or twenty-five. I learn, also, that, with scarcely a single exception in the whole State, the scholars are kept in spelling-classes, or they spell daily from their reading-lessons, from the time of their earliest combination of letters, up to the time of their leaving school; and yet, if testimony, derived from a thousand sources, and absolutely uniform, can be relied on, there is a Babel-like diversity in the spelling of our language.

It is impossible to ascertain with any considerable degree of precision the percentage of words in ordinary use which the children are unable to spell; but it seems to be the general opinion of the most competent observers, that the schools have retrograded within the last generation or half-generation in regard to orthography. Nor is the condition of the schools better in regard to reading, as will hereafter be shown.

The evil of incorrect spelling and unintelligent reading is, by no means, wholly imputable to teachers. It springs, in part, from the use of books ill adapted to the different

stages of growth in youthful minds. Another cause consists in a most pernicious error on the part of parents in regard to the true objects of reading. Many teachers have assured me that they are perfectly aware that the time spent in reading is mainly lost ; but that the usages of the school and the demands of the district prohibit them—perhaps under penalty of dismissal—from adopting a better mode. It is said, that the first and only inquiry made by parents of their children is, “how many times and how much have you read?” not “what have you read about?” A question like the last presupposes some judgment and some ability to follow it up with further inquiries ; but anybody can put the first, for it is an easy problem which solves the ratio of mental progress by the number of pages mechanically gone over. The children’s minds are not looked into, to see what new operations they can accurately perform ; but the inquiry relates only to the amount of labor done by the organs of speech ;—as though so many turns of the bodily machine would yield, perforce, a corresponding amount of mental product. It is characteristic of the learned professions, that the person employed directs the employer ; and it is earnestly to be hoped, that teachers will soon deservedly win so much of the confidence of the community, that they will no longer feel constrained to practise methods they know to be valueless, in order to harmonize with opinions they know to be pernicious.

It is probable, also, that this mischief may have been aggravated, in those places where there is a gradation of schools, by the conditions, prescribed in their regulations, for advancing from one school to another. One important fact, I have learned, is, that in places containing in the aggregate not less than one hundred thousand inhabitants, (about one-seventh of the population of the State,) a con-

dition for rising from one school to another is, either in express words or in substance, that the candidate shall be able to "read fluently." Under such a rule, should a strong desire exist to advance children to a higher school, there is great danger that the value of *intelligent* reading will be sacrificed to the worthlessness of mere "*fluent*" reading.

In this State, where the schools are open to all, an inability to spell the commonly used words in our language justly stamps the deficient mind with the stigma of illiteracy. Notwithstanding the intrinsic difficulty of mastering our orthography, there must be some defect in the manner of teaching it;—otherwise, this daily attention of the children to the subject, from the commencement to the end of their school-going life, would make them adepts in the mystery of spelling, except in cases of mental incapacity. Anomalous, arbitrary, contradictory, as is the formation of the words of our language from its letters, yet it is the blessing of the children, that they know not what they undertake, when they begin the labor.

But, however deeply we may be mortified at the general inability of our youth to spell well, it is the lightest of all regrets, compared with the calamity of their pretending to read what they fail to understand. Language is not merely a necessary instrument of civilization, past or prospective, but it is an indispensable condition of our existence as rational beings. We are accustomed to speak with admiration of those assemblages of things, we call the necessities, the comforts, the blessings of life, without thinking that language is a pre-necessary to them all. It requires a union of two things, entirely distinct in themselves, to confer the highest attribute of human greatness;—in the first place, a creative mind, revolving, searching, reforming, perfecting, within its own silent recesses; and

then such power over the energy and copiousness of language, as can bring into life whatever was prepared in darkness, and can transfer it to the present or the absent, to contemporaries or posterity. Thucydides makes Pericles say, that "one who forms a judgment upon any point, but cannot explain himself clearly to the people, might as well have never thought at all on the subject." The highest strength of understanding and justness of feeling, without fitting language to make themselves manifest, are but as the miser's hoard, without even the reversion of benefit we may ultimately expect from the latter. And for all social purposes, thought and expression are dependent, each upon the other. Ideas without words are valueless to the public; and words without ideas have this mischievous attribute, that they inflict the severest pains and penalties on those who are most innocent of thus abusing them.

'This is not a place to speak of the nature and utility of language, any further than is rigidly necessary to an exposition of the best mode of acquiring and the true object in using it. Within this limit, it may be observed, that we arrive at knowledge in two ways: first, by our own observation of phenomena without, and our own consciousness of what passes within us; and we seek words aptly to designate whatever has been observed, whether material or mental. In this case, the objects and events are known to us, before the names, or phrases, which describe them; or, secondly, we see or hear words, and through a knowledge of their diversified applications we become acquainted with objects and phenomena, of which we should otherwise have remained forever ignorant. In this case, the words precede a knowledge of the things they designate. In one case we are introduced to words through things; in the other, to things, through

words ; but when once both have been strongly associated together, the presence of either will suggest its correlative. The limited fund of knowledge laid open to us by the former mode bears no assignable proportion to the immense resources proffered us by the latter. Without language, we should know something of the more obtrusive phenomena, within reach of the senses, but an impenetrable wall of darkness would lie beyond their narrow horizon. With language, that horizon recedes until the expanse of the globe, with its continents, its air, its oceans, and all that are therein, lies under our eye, like an adjacent landscape. Without language, our own memory dates the beginning of time, and the record of our own momentary existence contains all that we can know of universal history. But with language, antiquity re-lives ; we are spectators at the world's creation ; we are present with our first progenitors, when the glory of a new life beamed from their inanimate frames ; the long train of historic events passes in review before us ; we behold the multiplication and expansion of our race, from individuals to nations, from patriarchs to dynasties ; we see their temporal vicissitudes and moral transformations ; the billowy rise and fall of empires ; the subsidence of races, whose power and numbers once overshadowed the earth ; the emergence of feeble and despised tribes into wide-extended dominion ; we see the dealings of God with men, and of men with each other ; — all, in fine, which has been done and suffered by our kindred nature, in arms, arts, science, philosophy, judicature, government ; and we see them, not by their own light only, but by the clearer light reflected upon them from subsequent times. What contrast could be more striking, than that between an unlettered savage and a philosopher, — the one imprisoned, the other privileged, — in the halls of the same

library ; — the one compelled by fear to gaze upon the pages of a book, the other impatient for the pleasure of doing it ! As the former moves his reluctant eye downwards over successive lines, he sees nothing but ink and paper. Beyond, it is vacancy. But to the eye of the philosopher, the sombre pages are magically illuminated. By their light he sees other lands and times. All that filled his senses before he opened the revealing page is only an atom of the world, in which he now expatiates. He is made free of the universe. A sentiment, uttered thousands of years ago, if touched by the spirit of humanity, falls freshly upon his responsive bosom. The fathers of the world come out of the past and stand around him and hold converse with him, as it were, face to face. Old eloquence and poetry are again heard and sung. Sages imbue him with their wisdom ; martyrs inspire him by their example ; and the authors of discoveries, each one of whom won immortality by the boon he conferred upon the race, become his teachers. Truths which it took ages to perfect and establish, sciences elaborated by the world's intellect, are passed over to him, finished and whole. This presents but the faintest contrast between the savage and the philosopher, looking at the same books, and, to a superficial observer, occupied alike.

To prepare children for resembling the philosopher, rather than the savage, it is well to begin early, but it is far more important to begin right ; and the school is the place for children to form an invincible habit of never using the organs of speech, by themselves, and as an apparatus, detached from, and independent of, the mind. The school is the place to form a habit of observing distinctions between words and phrases, and of adjusting the language used to various extents of meaning. It is the place where they are to commence the great art of adapt-



ing words to ideas and feelings, just as we apply a measuring instrument to objects to be measured. Then, in after-life, they will never venture upon the use of words which they do not understand ; and they will be enabled to use language, co-extensive with their thoughts and feelings, — language which shall mark off so much of any subject as they wish to exhibit, as plainly as though they could have walked round it and set up landmarks.

There is time enough devoted to exercises on language in our schools, to have enabled every one of that numerous class of citizens, whose attainments and good sense entitle them to be elected to municipal offices or to some station in the government, to prepare written documents, to draught petitions, reports and so forth, upon all ordinary subjects, not professional or technical. Yet how many men of excellent judgment find themselves unable to express their thoughts clearly and forcibly, in speech or writing, because they have never been accustomed to apply language to mental operations. Every man, conversant with the profession of the law, knows that no inconsiderable portion of those litigated cases, which burden courts and embroil neighborhoods, arises from some misapprehension of the meaning of the language, used by the parties, in oral or written contracts. The time spent by the scholars in reading, from the age of eight or ten to sixteen years, is amply sufficient to enrich their minds with a great amount of various and useful knowledge, without encroaching one hour upon other accustomed studies.

There is another fact, most pertinent to this part of the subject. It is well known that science itself, among scientific men, can never advance far beyond a scientific language in which to record its laws and principles. An unscientific language, like the Chinese, will keep a peo-

ple unscientific forever. So the knowledge of a people on any subject cannot far exceed the compass of the language which they fully comprehend. If what are called the exact sciences do not depend upon the exactness of the language they use, all exactness in other sciences does. Nor is it a fact of less importance, that language re-acts upon the mind that uses it. It is like the garments in which some nations clothe themselves, which shape the very limbs that draw them on. Men are generally very willing to modify or change their opinions and views, while they exist in thought merely, but when once formally expressed, the language chosen often becomes the mould of the opinion. The opinion fills the mould, but cannot break it and assume a new form. Thus errors of thought and of life originate in impotence of language.

The English language has been estimated to contain seventy or eighty thousand words in reputable use. A knowledge of so many of these words as are in common use, with a power of summoning them, like trained bands, to come at the bidding of thought, arises from the smallest beginnings. The distance is so immense between the first, rude articulation of an infant, and the splendid and law-giving utterance of an eloquent man, that we could hardly believe, beforehand, that the two extremes had reference to the same individual. To gain time, by shortening the distance between these extremes, or by removing obstacles and thus accelerating progress from the former to the latter, is one of the most appropriate labors of education. The hints which follow are offered with diffidence; in the hope, however, that they may prove useful themselves, or be suggestive to other minds of that which is better.

The process of learning to spell our language is so im-

perceptibly lost in that of learning to read it, that the two can best be considered together.

One preliminary truth is to be kept steadily in view in all the processes of teaching, and in the preparation of all its instruments; viz., that, though much may be done by others to aid, yet the effective labor must be performed by the learner himself. Knowledge cannot be poured into a child's mind like fluid from one vessel into another. The pupil may do something by intuition, but generally there must be a conscious effort on his part. He is not a passive recipient, but an active, voluntary agent. He must do more than admit or welcome; he must reach out, and grasp, and bring home. It is the duty of the teacher to bring knowledge within arm's-length of the learner; and he must break down its masses into portions so minute, that they can be taken up and appropriated, one by one; but the final appropriating act must be the learner's. Knowledge is not annexed to the mind like a foreign substance, but the mind assimilates it by its own vital powers. It is far less true, that each one must earn his own bread by the sweat of his own brow, than it is that each one must earn his own knowledge by the labor of his own brain; for, strictly speaking, nature recognizes no title to it by inheritance, gift or finding. Development of mind is by growth and organization, not by external accretion. Hence all effective teaching must have reference to this indispensable, consummating act and effort of the learner. The feelings may undoubtedly be modified by external impressions, and, therefore, the mind is sometimes spoken of as passive, recipient, adoptive; and the objects around us have a fitness and adaptation to awaken mental activity; but the acquisition of positive knowledge is not effected by a process of involuntary absorption. Such a

notion belongs to the philosophy by which, a few years ago, a grammatical chart was published and pretty extensively sold in some of the States, whose peculiar virtue it was, that, if hung up somewhere in a house, the whole family would shortly become good grammarians, by mysteriously imbibing, as it were, certain grammatical effluvia. The distinction should become broader and broader, between the theory of education which deals with mind as living spirit, and that which deals with it as a lifeless substance. Every scholar, in a school, must think with his own mind, as every singer, in a choir, must sing with his own voice.

If then, in learning, all wills and desires, all costs, labors, efforts, of others, are dependent, at last, upon the will of the learner, the first requisite is the existence in his mind of a desire to learn. Children, who spend six months in learning the alphabet, will, on the playground, in a single half-day or moonlight evening learn the intricacies of a game or sport,—where to stand, when to run, what to say, how to count, and what are the laws and the ethics of the game; the whole requiring more intellectual effort than would suffice to learn half a dozen alphabets. So of the recitation of verses, mingled with action, and of juvenile games, played in the chimney-corner. And the reason is, that for the one, there is desire; while against the other, there is repugnance. The teacher, in one case, is rolling a weight up hill; in the other, down; for gravitation is not more to the motions of a heavy body, than desire is to the efficiency of the intellect. Until a desire to learn exists within the child, some foreign force must constantly be supplied to keep him agoing; but from the moment that a desire is excited, he is self-motive, and goes alone.

Perhaps the best way of inspiring a young child with a

desire of learning to read, is to read to him, with proper intervals, some interesting story, perfectly intelligible, yet as full of suggestion as of communication; for the pleasure of discovering is always greater than that of perceiving. Care should be taken, however, to leave off before the ardor of curiosity cools. He should go away longing, not loathing. After the appetite has become keen, — and nature supplies the zest, — the child can be made to understand how he can procure this enjoyment for himself. The motive of affection also may properly be appealed to, that is, a request to learn in order to please the teacher; but this should never be pressed so far as to jeopard its existence, for it is a feeling more precious than all knowledge. The process of learning words and letters is toilsome, and progress will be slow, unless a motive is inspired before instruction is attempted; and if three months are allowed to teach a child his letters, there is greater probability, that the work will be done at the end of the time, even though ten weeks of it should be spent in gaining his voluntary co-operation during the residue of the time. A desire of learning is better than all external opportunities, because it will find or make opportunities, and then improve them.

Such are the difficulties in acquiring the orthography of our language, that it is said we have but two or three classes of uniformly correct spellers. Almost all, except publishers or printers and proof-readers, are more or less deficient in this acquisition. While some other languages, as the Italian, French and German, assign to individual letters a power, which is scarcely varied whenever they recur; the power given to the letters, in the English alphabet, bears little resemblance to their power, when combined in words. In a vast number of words, there is

a uniformity of pronunciation with diversity in spelling, or a diversity in pronunciation with similar spelling. The same letter has many different sounds, while different letters have the same sound, so that the learner, after learning the sound of a letter in one place, has no assurance of being right in giving it the same sound in another. The letters seem to change work with each other. Added to this, many words have silent letters; and in words, otherwise of a formation exactly similar, some have silent letters, others none. Were it not for our familiarity with it, no fact would be more striking than that which always presents itself to the eye, upon opening an English dictionary; viz., the double column of words for the same language,—one for a guide in spelling, the other, in pronunciation. But it is no part of this report to analyze our language and expose its unscientific structure and anomalous composition. It is either very much too late or too early to reform its arbitrary constitution. To adapt the pronunciation to the orthography would be to make a new spoken language; to adapt its orthography to its pronunciation would be to make a new written one.

When a motive to learn exists, the first practical question respects the order in which letters and words are to be taught; i.e., whether letters, taken separately, as in the alphabet, shall be taught before words, or whether monosyllabic and familiar words shall be taught before letters. In those who learnt, and have since taught, in the former mode, and have never heard of any other, this suggestion may excite surprise. The mode of teaching words first, however, is not mere theory; nor is it new. It has now been practised for some time in the primary schools of the city of Boston,—in which there are four or five thousand children,—and it is found to succeed

better than the old mode. In other places in this country, and in some parts of Europe, where education is successfully conducted, the practice of teaching words first, and letters subsequently, is now established. Having no personal experience, I shall venture no affirmation upon this point; but will only submit a few remarks for the consideration of those, who wish, before countenancing the plan, to examine the reasons on which it is founded.

During the first year of a child's life, he perceives, thinks, and acquires something of a store of ideas, without any reference to word or letters. After this, the wonderful faculty of language begins to develop itself. Children then utter words, — the names of objects around them, — as whole sounds, and without any conception of the letters of which those words are composed. In speaking the word "apple," for instance, young children think no more of the Roman letters which spell it, than, in eating the fruit, they think of the chemical ingredients — the oxygen, hydrogen, and carbon — which compose it. Hence, presenting them with the alphabet, is giving them what they never saw, heard, or thought of before. It is as new as algebra, and, to the eye, not very unlike it. But printed names of known things are the signs of sounds which their ears have been accustomed to hear, and their organs of speech to utter, and which may excite agreeable feelings and associations, by reminding them of the objects named. When put to learning the letters of the alphabet first, the child has no acquaintance with them, either with the eye, the ear, the tongue, or the mind; but if put to learning familiar words first, he already knows them by the ear, the tongue, and the mind, while his eye only is unacquainted with them. He is thus introduced to a stranger through the medium of old acquaintances. It can hardly be doubted, therefore, that a

child would learn to name any twenty-six familiar words much sooner than the twenty-six unknown, unheard, and unthought-of letters of the alphabet.

For another reason, the rapidity of acquisition will be greater, if words are taught before letters. To learn the words signifying objects, qualities, actions, with which the child is familiar, turns his attention to those objects, if present, or revives the idea of them, if absent, and thus they may be made the source of great interest and pleasure. We all know, that the ease with which any thing is learned, and the length of time it is remembered, are in the direct ratio of the vividness of the pleasurable emotions which enliven the acquisition.

But there is another consideration far more forcible than the preceding. The general practice is founded upon the notion that the learning of letters facilitates the correct combination of them into words. Hence children are drilled on the alphabet, until they pronounce the name of each letter at sight. And yet, when we combine letters into words, we forthwith discard the sounds which belonged to them as letters. The child is taught to sound the letter *a*, until he becomes so familiar with it, that the sound is uttered as soon as the character is seen. But the first time this letter is found, even in the most familiar words, — as in *father, papa, mamma, apple, peach, walnut, hat, cap, bat, rat, slap, pan, &c., &c.*, — it no longer has the sound he was before taught to give it, but one entirely different. And so of the other vowels. In words, they all seem in masquerade. Where is the alphabetic sound of *o* in the words *word, dove, plough, enough, other*, and in innumerable others? Any person may verify this by taking any succession of words, at random, in any English book. The consequence is, that whenever the child meets his old friends in new company, like rogues, they have



all changed their names. Thus the knowledge of the sounds of letters in the alphabet becomes an obstacle to the right pronunciation of words; and the more perfect the knowledge, the greater the obstacle. The reward of the child, for having thoroughly mastered his letters, is to have his knowledge of them cut up in detail, by a regular series of contradictions, just as fast as he brings it forward. How different, for instance, is the sound of the word *is*, from the two alphabetic sounds, *i* and *s*; — of the word *we*, from the two sounds, *w* and *e*; — of the word *two*, from the three sounds, *t*, *w*, and *o*. We teach an honest child to sound the letters, *e*, *y*, *e*, singly, until he utters them at sight, and then, with a grave face, we ask him what *e*, *y*, *e*, spells; and if he does not give the long sound of *i*, he is lucky if he escapes a rebuke or a frown. Nothing can more clearly prove the delightful confidence and trustfulness of a child's nature, than his not boldly charging us, under such circumstances, with imposition and fraud.

There is a fact, however, which may, perhaps, in part, cancel the differences here pointed out. The alphabet must be learned, at some time, because there are various occasions, besides those of consulting dictionaries or cyclopædias, where the regular sequence of the letters must be known; and possibly it may be thought, that it will be as difficult to learn the letters, after learning the words, as before. But the fact, which deprives this consideration of some part at least of its validity, is, that it always greatly facilitates an acquisition of the names of objects, or persons, to have been conversant with their forms and appearances beforehand. The learning of words is an introduction to an acquaintance with the letters composing them.

To obviate the inconsistency of teaching children the

names of letters, which are to be untaught as soon as they are combined into words, some persons instruct them in the vocal elements of the letters only ; — that is, to utter, for each letter, that part of the sound of a whole word, which belongs to the letters, respectively, — as to give a single breathing for the letter *h*, instead of the sound of *aytch*. This practice is very limited.

The next step in the acquisition of our language is the spelling of its words. The arbitrary and capricious formation of words from letters, is, undoubtedly, one great cause, that, with all our attention to the subject, we have so few good spellers.

One fact has been often remarked, that if children do not learn to spell pretty correctly before the age of ten or twelve years, they rarely become good spellers afterwards. This fact supplies us with a useful hint, in regard to making other studies give place, a little, to this, before the favorable season is passed. Another consideration, derived from the order in which the intellectual powers are developed, strongly corroborates the same position. Language is an early developed intellectual power ; — reason is one of the latest. The spelling of a tongue, so anomalous as ours, depends upon a verbal memory. It is not a subject to be reasoned about. The more one relies upon his reason to determine the true spelling of English words, the oftener he will mistake. The discovery and correct application of principles and analogies would generally exclude correctness. I presume it has happened to many persons, when writing, that if they could write one of the less common words, without thinking how it should be spelt, they would write it correctly ; but if, by any chance, the inquiry how it should be spelt arose in their minds, they would immediately be involved in doubts, which no reasoning could solve, and be obliged to

turn to a dictionary. These facts indicate also, that spelling should be pursued at an age when more is learned by perception and imitation than by reflection.

But one thing should be insisted upon, *from* the beginning, and especially *at* the beginning. No word should be taught, whose meaning is not understood. The teacher should not count out words faster than ideas. The foundation of the habit should be laid, in the reading of the very first lesson, of regarding words as the names of things ; as belonging to something else, and as nothing by themselves. They should be looked at as a medium, and not as an end. It is as senseless for a child to stop at the sign of the printed word, in reading, as it would be to stop at the sound of the spoken word, in conversation. What child would not repel the intercourse of a person, who spoke to him only words of which he knew nothing? No personal charms would be long sufficient to compensate for speaking to a child in an unknown tongue. How is it possible, then, that an active-minded child should not disdain the dreary pages of a book which awaken no thought or emotion within him ;—which are neither beauty to the eye, nor music to the ear, nor sense to the understanding? As reading is usually taught, the child does not come into communication with his lesson by any one of all his faculties. When a child looks into a mirror, or at a picture where the perspective is strikingly marked, he will reach around to look behind the mirror, or behind the picture, in hope of finding the objects in the place where they appear to be. He cares nothing for the mirror, nor for the canvas ;—his mind is with the things presented to his senses. In reading, the page should be only as the mirror, or picture, through which objects are beheld. Thus there would be far more delight in looking at the former, than at the latter ; because

words can present more circumstances of variety, beauty, life, amplitude, than any reflecting surface or dead picture. Should we not revolt at the tyranny of being obliged to pore, day after day, upon the outer darkness of a Chinese manuscript? But if the words are not understood, the more regular formation of the Chinese characters gives them a decided advantage over our own letters. Give a child two glasses, precisely similar in every respect, except that one shall be opaque, the other a magnifier. Through the former nothing can be seen, and it therefore degenerates into a bawble; but the latter seems to create a thousand new and brilliant objects, and hence he is enamoured of its quality. There is precisely the same difference in the presentation of words. Yet we punish children because they do not master words without any regard to their being understood.

But how can this plan be executed? In this way. During the first year of a child's life, before the faculty of speech is developed, — before he has ever uttered a word, — he has obtained a considerable stock of ideas respecting objects, qualities, and motions. During the next year or two, and before it is usual to teach letters, he is employed through every waking hour, both in learning the words expressive of known phenomena, and also in acquiring a knowledge of new things and events; so that before the age of four, or even three years, the items of his inventory of elementary knowledge swell to thousands. In his memory are not merely playthings, but catalogues of furniture, food, dress, insects, animals, vehicles, objects in natural scenery, divisions of time, and so forth, with various motions and appearances belonging to them all. Numbers, sounds, events, feelings, also come into the list. This is a stock not readily exhausted. By first teaching the names or phrases expressive of these,

the substance is always present to his mind, and the words are mere signs or incidents ; and a habit is formed of always keeping the mind, in after-life, intent upon things and their relations, — a habit of inestimable value, and the only foundation of intellectual greatness.

I am not unaware of what is said by Locke, Burke, and others, of our using words and phrases, without at all summoning into the mind the particular ideas signified. This is undoubtedly true, to some extent, but it belongs to a later period in life. It is only after having used words, times almost innumerable, with an accompanying conception of the things signified, that we, at last, transfer to the words a general conception of what originally belonged to the ideas. If comparisons may be allowed to illustrate a point somewhat obscure, the words have been so long used as a vehicle of the things, that, at last, when we see the vehicle, we presume the contents ; — or, as in the case of those persons who are accustomed to count large masses of specie, over and over again, in branded boxes or labelled bags ; having opened them many times, and found them to contain the quantity stamped, they afterwards count by the mark. So it is with words in relation to ideas. But, if the ideas have never been compared with the words, that is, if the specie has never been counted and compared with the stamp, then the latter has no signification. Hence the comparisons are the very first steps in the operation, and it is only by virtue of having made them that we can afterwards venture to facilitate the operation by relying upon the index. And an early habit of associating every word with an idea is rendered so much the more necessary, because words are only arbitrary and artificial signs of thoughts and feelings. Were they natural signs, then the whole stress of observation and experience through

life would serve to connect and bind together, more and more closely, the signs and the things signified. There would be a perpetual and strong tendency to coalescence between them. But as the relation is wholly conventional, if the habit is not formed of uniting the sound to the sense, an opposite habit of separating them is necessarily established. For an obvious reason, therefore, a correct habit is more easily formed at the commencement than ever afterwards.

Were this process observed, it would reduce almost to nothing two classes of men amongst us; one of whom are greatly impaired in their usefulness, because, though they think much, they can never speak; the other absolutely noxious, because, though speaking much, they never think. The latter class, indeed, seem to be retaliating upon that early period of their life, when they thought without speaking, by speaking without thinking during the residue.

When it is said, however, that a child should not be put to reading what he cannot understand, it is to be taken with that reasonable qualification which springs from the nature of the case, and which every candid mind will supply. There are certain words in every-day use, of whose comprehension all finite intellect must fall almost infinitely short. Such are the words immensity, infinity, absolute perfection, and so forth. These are used, as mathematicians use algebraic signs, to express unknown quantities. There are other words also, of whose meaning no man has any thing more than a proximate apprehension. But a child of three years may perfectly understand what is meant, if he reads the word *newspaper*, and he may know many things respecting it, such as *title, outside, inside, columns, margin, top, bottom, size, length, breadth, &c.*, — and these constitute a palpa-

ble idea of a newspaper, — without knowing that it is a microcosm, and that, for its production, there may have been required an effort of all the human faculties, working on the three kingdoms, mineral, vegetable, and animal. So a child may have a clear conception of the meaning of such words as *home*, *parent*, *affection*, *guilt*, *conscience*, without penetrating one line's length into their unfathomable depth of meaning. What is insisted upon is, that the child should have a clear conception of what is meant, that such conception should be correct as far as it goes, and that it should be as extensive as his ability will allow.

Were a child skilfully taught, with only a due alternation between physical and mental exercise, and with an inspection of as many of the objects of nature and art as common opportunity would allow, it is believed that he might acquire a knowledge of the spelling and of the *primary* meanings of substantially all the unscientific and untechnical words, in ordinary use, before passing the age when orthography becomes more difficult of attainment. If, however, owing to early neglect in education, or to mental inefficiency, the most favorable season for learning to spell is passing away, and it is deemed advisable to hasten this acquisition at the expense of other studies, or (if any one so prefers) even of the meaning of words, then it is believed that the words may be so classified in the spelling-book, as greatly to facilitate the labor. For this purpose, let words be arranged together, whose difficult syllables agree in formation; as, for instance, *syllable*, *sycophant*, *sylvan*, *symbol*, *synagogue*, *syntax*, in which *y* has the sound of *i*, short; or in words where *ch* has the sound of *k*, as in *machination*, *chronological*, *bacchanalian*; or in words where *qu* has the sound of *k*, as in *mosque*, *opaque*, *liquor*; or where

*ei* has the sound of *a*, as in *eight, weight, inveigh, &c.* This list might be almost indefinitely extended; the above are given as specimens merely. The great advantage of this system is, that when the true formation of the difficult syllable is known for one word, it is known for the whole table, and frequent repetitions of the table will fix the order of the letters in the memory, which, by the law of association, will afterwards involuntarily recur, like products in the multiplication-table, or successive notes in a well-learned piece of music. Habit, founded on this association, will command the successive letters in writing, as unconsciously as it does successive steps in walking. An excellent spelling-book has lately been published in this city, in which words are arranged with reference to their intelligibleness to children; and Webster and Fowle have made close approximation, certainly, to arrangements of words, in conformity with the law of mental association, above referred to. It is believed that a spelling-book may be prepared which shall combine the first, greatest, and most indispensable of all requisites, that of addressing the innate and universal love of learning new things, — with such a philosophical adaptation to the successive periods of mental development, as shall, as a general rule, present what is to be learned during the epoch in which it can be most easily and pleasurable acquired.

Would my limits permit, I should be glad to enter into some detail with regard to the modes, now practised in our schools, of teaching orthography. I will, however, only observe, that spelling, by writing (when the pupil can write), appears to have great advantages over spelling orally. In the business of life, we have no occasion to spell orally, and thousands of cases have made it certain, that the same person may be a good speller with the



lips, who is an indifferent one with the pen. Nor is this any more strange, than that a man should not be able to do dexterously with his left hand what he has always been accustomed to do with his right.

It is obvious, that even in regard to orthography, the book-maker is the great auxiliary of the teacher. It is not less emphatically true of reading, that the book-maker and the teacher are performing different parts of one work. In this division of labor, the book-maker's part is first to be performed, and it is impossible for the best teacher wholly to make amends for what is untoward or preposterous on the author's part; because clumsy and defective implements will baffle the ingenuity of the most perfect workman. While measures are in progress, therefore, to increase the competency of teachers, through the medium of Normal Schools, the principles on which school-books should be prepared should receive careful attention; that good agents may have good instruments. I avail myself of this occasion to make a few suggestions upon the subject of reading-books.

Reading is divisible into two parts. It consists of the *mechanical* and the *mental*. The mechanical part is the utterance of the articulate sounds of a language, on inspecting its written or printed signs. It is called mechanical, because the operation closely resembles that of a machine, which may receive the best of materials, and run through a thousand parcels of them every year; — the machine itself remaining just as bare and naked at the end of the year as it was at the beginning. On the other hand, one portion of the mental part of reading consists in a reproduction in the mind of the reader of whatever was in the mind of the author; so that whether the author describes atoms or worlds, narrates the history of individuals or nations, kindles into sublimity, or melts

in pathos,—whatever was in the author's mind starts into sudden existence in the reader's mind, as nearly as their different mental constitutions will allow. An example of the purely mechanical part is exhibited in reading a foreign language, no word of which is understood ; as in the case of Milton's daughters, who read the dead languages to their blind father ; — they, with eyes, seeing nothing but black marks upon white paper, — he, without eyes, surveying material and spiritual worlds, — at once charmed by their beauties, and instructed by their wisdom.

With the mental part, then, reading becomes the noblest instrument of wisdom ; without it, it is the most despicable part of folly and worthlessness. Beforehand, it would seem quite as incredible, that any person should compel children to go through with the barren forms of reading, without ideas, as to make them perform all the motions of eating, without food. The body would not dwindle under the latter more certainly than the mind under the former. The inevitable consequences are, that all the delight of acquisition is foregone ; the reward which nature bestows upon the activity of the faculties is forfeited, — a reward which is richer than all prizes, and more efficient than all chastisement ; — and an inveterate habit is formed of dissociating thought and language. “ Understandest thou what thou readest,” therefore, is a question quite as apposite when put by a teacher to a child in his horn-book, as when asked by an Apostle of the ambassador of a Queen.

Entertaining views of the importance of this subject, of which the above is only the feeblest expression, I have devoted especial pains to learn, with some degree of numerical accuracy, how far the reading, in our schools, is an exercise of the mind in thinking and feeling, and

how far it is a barren action of the organs of speech upon the atmosphere. My information is derived, principally, from the written statements of the school committees of the respective towns,—gentlemen who are certainly exempt from all temptation to disparage the schools they superintend. The result is, that more than eleven-twelfths of all the children in the reading-classes, in our schools, do not understand the meaning of the words they read; that they do not master the sense of the reading-lessons, and that the ideas and feelings intended by the author to be conveyed to, and excited in, the reader's mind, still rest in the author's intention, never having yet reached the place of their destination. And by this it is not meant that the scholars do not obtain such a full comprehension of the subject of the reading-lessons, in its various relations and bearings, as a scientific or erudite reader would do, but that they do not acquire a reasonable and practicable understanding of them. It would hardly seem that the combined efforts of all persons engaged could have accomplished more in defeating the true objects of reading.

How the cause of this deficiency is to be apportioned among the legal supervisors of the schools, parents, teachers or authors of school-books, it is impossible to say; but surely it is an evil, gratuitous, widely prevalent, and threatening the most alarming consequences. But it is not a remediless one. There is intelligence enough in this community to search out the cause, and wisdom enough to find and apply a remedy.

It has been already stated, that we may acquire a knowledge of a very few things,—such as are placed within the range of our senses,—without the use of language; but that language is the only medium by which any thing, prior to our own memory and expe-

rience, or beyond our own vision, can be made known to us. Although, therefore, the words which our language is said to contain, seem to be many ; yet when we think of all the relations of human life, — domestic, business, and social ; — of the countless objects in the different kingdoms of nature, with their connections and dependencies ; — of the sciences which have been founded upon them, and of the arts to which they have been made subservient ; — of all, in fine, external to ourselves, within the circle of time and beneath the arch of heaven ; and of our own conscious hopes, fears, desires, to which that arch is no boundary ; we shall see, at once, that the words of our language, numerous as they are, are only as one to infinity, compared with the number of the objects to which they are daily applied. And yet these words are sufficient not only to present us with an image and a record of past and present existences, but they are capable of outrunning the course of time, and describing the possibilities of the future, and of transcending the limits of reality, and portraying the fancy-peopled worlds created by the imagination. And, what is still more wonderful is, that, with the aid of these comparatively few words, we can designate and touch, as it were with the finger, any one fact or event in this universe of facts and events, or parcel out any groups of them, from tens to tens of myriads ; or we can note any period on the dial-plate of by-gone centuries, just as easily as we refer to the hours of the passing day. Now to accomplish this, it is obvious that language must be susceptible of combinations indefinitely numerous ; that most of its single words must assume different meanings, in different collocations, and that phrases, capable of expressing any one or any millions of these facts, vicissitudes, relations, must be absolutely inexhaustible. Then, again, language has

various, strongly marked forms, as colloquial, philosophical, poetical, devotional ; and in each of these divisions, whatever subject we wish to separate from the rest, language can carve it out, and display it distinctly and by itself, for our examination. It handles the most abstruse relations and affinities, and traces the most subtle analogies to their vanishing-point ; or, with equal ease, it condenses the most universal principles into brief sentences, or, if we please, into single words. Hence, in using it, to express any greater or smaller part of what is perceived by the senses, by intellect, or by genius, the two conditions are, that we must discern, mentally, what individual object or quality, or what combinations of objects and qualities, we wish to specify ; and then we must select the words and form the phrases, — or volumes, if need be, — which will depict or designate by name the individual objects we mean, or will draw a line round the combination of objects we wish to exhibit and describe. All true use of language, therefore, necessarily involves a mental act of adjustment, measure, precision, pertinency ; otherwise it cannot fix the extent or gauge the depth of any subject. Language is to be selected and applied to the subject-matter, whether that subject-matter be business, history, art or consciousness, just as a surveyor applies his chain to the measurement of areas, or as an artist selects his colors to portray the original. But what must be the result, if the surveyor knows nothing of the length of the chain he uses, and if the artist selects his colors by chance, and knows not to what parts he applies them ?

Hence, the acquisition of language consists far less in mastering words as individuals, than it does in adjusting their applications to things, in sentences and phrases. And one great object — there are others not less important —

of teaching the children in our schools to read, is, that they may there commence this habit of adjustment, of specifying and delineating with precision, whatever is within the range of their knowledge and experience. All attempts, therefore, to teach language to children, are vain, which have not this constant reference to the subject-matter intended to be specified and described. If the thing signified is not present to the mind, it is impossible that the language should be a measure, for, by the supposition, there is nothing to be measured. It becomes a mere hollow sound; and with this disadvantage, that, from the parade which is made in administering the nothingness, the child is led to believe he has received something. The uselessness of such a process would seem to be enough, without the falsity. The fact, that many children may not be able to make great progress in this adjustment of words to things, so far from being any reply to this view of the subject, only renders it so much the more important that what is done should be done rightly.

Notwithstanding the immense treasures of knowledge accumulated in the past six thousand years, and the immense difference between the learned men of our own and of ancient times, yet no one denies that children are now brought into the world in the same state of ignorance as they were before the flood. When born, only a single instinct is developed, — that of appetite for food. Weeks pass, before the quickest of all the senses — the sight — takes note of any object. At about the age of a year, the faculty of language dimly appears. One after another, other powers bud forth; but it seems to be the opinion of the best metaphysicians, that the highest faculties of the intellect — those which, in their full development and energy, make the lawgivers of the race, and

the founders of moral dynasties — hardly dawn before the age of twelve or fourteen years. And yet, in many of the reading-books now in use in the schools, the most pithy sayings of learned men; the aphorisms in which moralists have deposited a life of observation and experience; the maxims of philosophers, embodying the highest forms of intellectual truth, are set down as First Lessons for children; — as though, because a child was born after Bacon and Franklin, he could understand them of course. While a child is still engrossed with visible and palpable objects, while his juvenile playthings are yet a mystery to him, he is presented with some abstraction or generalization, just discovered, after the profoundest study of men and things, by some master intellect. But it matters not to children, how much knowledge or wisdom there may be in the world, on subjects foreign to themselves, until they have acquired strength of mind sufficient to receive and appropriate them. The only interest which a child has in the attainments of the age in which he is born, is, that they may be kept from him until he has been prepared to receive them. Erudite and scientific men, for their own convenience, have formed summaries, digests, abstracts, of their knowledge, each sentence of which contains a thousand elements of truth, that had been mastered in detail; and, on inspection of these abbreviated forms, they are reminded of, *not taught*, the individual truths they contain. Yet these are given to children, as though they would call up in their minds the same ideas which they suggest to their authors. But while children are subjected to the law of their Creator, that of being born in ignorance, their growth is the desideratum, which Education should supply, and their intellect cannot thrive upon what it does not understand; — nay, more, the intellect carries as a burden whatever it

does not assimilate as nourishment. An indispensable quality of a school-book, then, is its adjustment to the power of the learner. No matter how far, or how little, advanced from the starting-point of ignorance a child may be, the teacher and the book must go to him. And this is only saying, that he cannot proceed upon his journey from a point not yet reached, but must first go through the intermediate stages. A child must know individual objects of a species, before he can understand a name descriptive of the species itself. He must know particulars, before he can understand the relations of analogy or contrast between them; he must be accustomed to ideas of visible and tangible extension, before it is of any use to tell him of the height of the Alps or the length of the Amazon; he must have definite notions of weight, before he can understand the force of gravitating planets; he must be acquainted with phenomena, before he can be instructed in the laws which harmonize their conflicting appearances; and he must know something of the relations of men, before he is qualified to infer the duties that spring from them.

Nor should the first lessons be simple and elementary, in regard to the subject only; but the language of the earliest ones should be literal. All figurative or metaphorical expression is based upon the literal, and can have no intelligible existence without it. After a clear apprehension of the literal meaning of words, there is a charm in their figurative applications; because a comparison is silently made between the figurative and the literal meanings, and the resemblance perceived awakens a delightful emotion. And this pleasure is proportioned to the distinctness of the related ideas. But how can a child understand those figures of speech, where a part is put for the whole, or the whole for a part, when he knows



nothing either of whole or part ;—where sensible objects are put for intelligible, or animate things for inanimate, when he is wholly ignorant of the subjects likened or contrasted ? How can there be any such thing as tautology to a child, who is unacquainted with what went before ; or how can he perceive antithesis if both extremes are invisible ? In writings, beautiful from the richness of their suggestion, the tacit reference to collateral ideas is wholly lost ; and yet it is the highest proof of a master, to interweave ideas with which pleasurable emotions have become associated. Hence, a child, put into reading-lessons which are beyond his ability, not only reads with a dormant understanding, but all the faculties, productive of taste, refinement, elegance, beauty, are torpid also. The faculties being unemployed, the reading, which otherwise would have been a pleasure, becomes irksome and repulsive. There is another pernicious consequence, inseparable from the practice of depositing, in the memory of children, those general and synoptical views which they do not understand. It leads to an opposite extreme in instruction ; for when children, whose memory only has been cultivated, are really to be taught any subject with thoroughness, and for practical application, it then becomes necessary to simplify and degrade it to the level of their feeble apprehension. But why cannot the faculties be strengthened by exercise, so that, in process of time, they can master more difficult subjects, as well as to degrade subjects to the level of weak faculties ?

In communicating the elements of knowledge to children, there is, at first, but little danger of being too minute and particular. Expansion, explanation, illustration, circumlocution,—all are necessary. But, as the child advances, less diffuseness is requisite. The prolix becomes concise. Different and more comprehensive

words are used, or the same in an enlarged signification. What was pulverized and examined in atoms is now collected and handled in masses. Care, however, is to be taken at every step, in the first place, that what is presented to the learner should demand a conscious effort on his part, for, without such an effort, there will be no increase of strength; and, in the next place, that what is presented should be attainable by an effort, for, without success, discouragement and despair will ensue. School-books, however, are made for classes, and not for individual minds, and hence the best books will be more precisely adapted to some minds than to others. This difference it is the duty of the teacher to equalize, by giving more copious explanations to the dull and unintelligent, and by tasking the strong and apprehensive with more difficult questions connected with the text. Every sentence will have related ideas of cause and effect, of what is antecedent, consequent or collateral, which may be explored to the precise extent indicated by different abilities. The old Balearic islanders of the Mediterranean, famed among the ancients for being the best bowmen and slingsmen in the then known world, had in this respect a true idea of Education. They placed the food of their children upon the branches of the trees, at different heights from the ground, according to age and proficiency, and when the children had dislodged it, by bow or sling, they had their meals, but not before.

Tested by this criterion, are not many of the reading-books in our schools too elevated for the scholars? It seems generally to have been the object of the compilers of these books to cull the most profound and brilliant passages, contained in a language, in which the highest efforts of learning, talent, and genius have been embalmed. Had there been a rivalry, like that at the

ancient Olympic games, where emulous nations, instead of individuals, had entered the classic lists, as competitors for renown, and our fame as a people had been staked upon our eloquent, school-book miscellanies, we should have questioned the integrity of the umpire, had we not won the prize. Certainly from no ancient, probably from no other modern language, could such a selection of literary excellences be made, as some of them exhibit, — demonstrative arguments on the most abstruse and recondite subjects, tasking the acuteness of practised logicians, and appreciable only by them ; — brilliant passages of parliamentary debates, whose force would be irresistible, provided only that one were familiar with all contemporary institutions and events ; — scenes from dramas, beautiful if understood, but unintelligible without an acquaintance with heathen mythology ; — wit, poetry, eloquence, whose shafts, to the vision of educated minds, are quick and refulgent as lightning, but giving out to the ignorant only an empty rumbling of words ; — every thing, in fine, may be found in their pages, which can make them, at once, worthy the highest admiration of the learned, and wholly unintelligible to children. If I may recur to the illustration of the Balearic islanders, given above ; the prizè of the young slingers and archers is invaluable, if it can be obtained ; but it is placed so high as to be wholly invisible. Children can advance from the proposition, that one and one make two, up to the measurement of planetary distances, but an immense number of steps must be taken in traversing the intermediate spaces. And it is only by a similar gradation and progressiveness, that a child can advance from understanding such nursery talk as “the ball rolls,” “the dog barks,” “the horse trots,” until his mind acquires such compass and velocity of movement, that when he reads the brief

declaration of the Psalmist, "O Lord, how manifold are thy works; in wisdom hast thou made them all!" his swift conception will sweep over all known parts of the universe in an instant, and return glowing with adoration of their Creator.

Using incomprehensible reading-books draws after it the inevitable consequence of bad reading. Except the mental part is well done, it is impossible to read with any rhetorical grace or propriety. Could any one, ignorant of the Latin and French languages, expect to read a Latin or French author with just modulations and expressiveness of voice, at the first or at the ten thousandth trial? And it matters not what language we read, provided the mechanical process is animated by no vitality of thought. Something, doubtless, depends upon flexibility and pliancy of physical organs; but should they be ever so perfect, a fitting style of delivery is born of intelligence and feeling only, and can have no other parentage. Without these, there will be no perception of impropriety, though epitaphs and epigrams are read in the same manner. If the pieces of which the reading-books consist are among the most difficult in the English language, is it not absurd to expect that the least instructed portion of the people, speaking English — the very children — should be able to display their meaning with grace and fulness? To encourage children to strive after a supposed natural way of expressing emotions and sentiments they do not feel, encourages deception, not sincerity; a discord, not a harmony, between the movements of mind and tongue. No rules, in regard to reading, can supply a defect in understanding what is read. Rhetorical directions, though they should equal the variety of musical notation, would not suffice to indicate the slower or swifter enunciation of emphatic or unemphatic words, or those modulations

of the human voice, which are said to amount to hundreds of thousands in number. Inflections and the rate of utterance are too volatile and changeful to be guided by rules; though perceptible, they are indescribable. All good reading of dramatic or poetic works springs from emotion. Nothing but the greatest histrionic power can express an emotion without feeling it. But, once let the subject-matter of the reading-lesson be understood, and, almost universally, nature will supply the proper variations of voice. A child makes no mistakes in talking, for the simple reason, that he never undertakes to say what he does not understand. Nature is the only master of rhetoric on the play-ground. Yet there, earnestness gives a quick and emphatic utterance; the voice is roughened by combative feelings; it is softened by all joyous and grateful emotions, and it is projected, as by the accuracy of an engineer, to strike the ear of a distant play-fellow. Nay, so perfect are undrilled children in this matter, that if any one of a group of twenty makes a false cadence or emphasis, or utters interrogatively what he meant to affirm, a simultaneous shout proclaims an observance of the blunder; yet, if the same group were immediately put to reading from some of our school-books, their many-sounding voices would shrink from their wide compass into a one-toned instrument; — or, what is far worse, if they affected an expression of sentiment, they would cast it so promiscuously over the sentences as to make good taste shudder. Occasionally, in some of the reading-books, there are lessons which the scholars fully understand; and I presume it is within the observation of every person, conversant with schools, that the classes learn more from those lessons than from the residue of the book. The moment such lessons are reached, the dull machinery quickens into life; the moment they are

passed, it becomes droning machinery again. Even the mechanical part of reading, therefore, is dependent for all its force, gracefulness and variety upon the mental.

There are other features of our reading-books too important to be unnoticed, even in a brief discussion of their merits. Two prominent characteristics are, the incompleteness of the subjects of the reading-lessons, considered each by itself; and the discordance between them, when viewed in succession. Lord Kaimes maintains, in substance, that there is an original, instinctive propensity or faculty of the mind, which demands the completion or finishing of what has been begun, and is displeased by an untimely or abrupt termination. Other metaphysicians attest the same doctrine. Whether such mental tendency be native or superinduced, its practical value can hardly be overestimated; and whatever conduces to establish or confirm it, should be sedulously fostered. In our state of civilization, all questions have become complex. Hence, an earnest desire to learn all the facts, to consider all the principles, which rightfully go to modify conclusions, is a copious and unfailing source of practical wisdom. Error often comes, not from any mistake in our judgments upon the premises given, but from omitting views, as much belonging to the subject as those which are considered. We often see men, who will develop one part of a case with signal ability, and yet are always in the wrong, because they overlook other parts, equally essential to a sound result. Thus error becomes the consequence of seeing only parts of truth. Often, the want of the hundredth part to make a whole, renders the possession of the other ninety-nine valueless. If one planet were left out of our astronomical computations, the motions of the solar system could not be explained, though all about the others were perfectly known. Children, therefore, should not

only be taught, but habituated, as far as possible, to compass the subject of inquiry, to explore its less obvious parts, and, if I may so speak, to circumnavigate it; so that their minds will be impatient of a want of completeness and thoroughness, and will resent one-sided views and half-presentations. Merely a habit of mind in a child of seeking for well-connected, well-proportioned views, would give the surest augury of a great man. Now, if there be such a tendency in the human mind, urging it to search out the totality of any subject, and rewarding success, not only with utility, but with a lively pleasure, is not the reading pupil defrauded both of the benefit and the enjoyment, by having his mind forcibly transferred, in rapid succession, from a few glimpses of one subject to as few glimpses of another? On looking into a majority of the reading-books in our schools, I believe it will be found, that they contain more separate pieces than leaves. Often, these pieces are antipodal to each other in style, treatment, and subject. There is a solemn inculcation of the doctrine of universal peace on one page, and a martial, slaughter-breathing poem on the next. I have a reading-book, in which a catalogue of the names of all the books of the Old and New Testaments is followed immediately, and on the same page, by a "receipt to make good red ink." But what is worst of all is, that the lessons, generally, have not, in any logical sense, either a beginning or an end. They are splendid passages, carved out of an eloquent oration or sermon, without premises or conclusion; — a page of compressed thought, taken from a didactic poem, without the slightest indication of the system of doctrines embodied in the whole; — extracts from forensic arguments, without any statement of the facts of the case, so that the imagination of the young reader is inflamed, while those faculties which determine the fitness

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and relevancy of the advocate's appeals are wholly unexercised ;— forty or fifty lines of the tenderest pathos, unaccompanied by any circumstances tending to awaken sympathy, and leaving the children to guess both at cause and consolation ;— and while no dramatist dares violate an absurd rule, that every tragedy written for the stage shall have five acts, a single isolated scene, taken from the middle of one of them, seems to be considered a fair proportion for a child. Probably in a school of an average number of scholars, three or four of these pieces would be read at each exercise, so that, even if the pieces were intelligible by themselves, the contradictory impressions will effectually neutralize each other. Surely, if, according to Lord Kaimes, there be an innate desire or propensity *to finish*, we should expect that the children would manifest it, in such cases, by desiring to have done with the book forever.

What the ancient rhetoricians said of a literary work, — that it should always have a beginning, a middle, and an end, — is more emphatically true of reading-lessons for children. Each piece should have the completeness of a fable or an allegory. Were a single figure cut from the historic canvas of some master-painter, and presented to us by itself, we should suffer vexation from the blankness of the mutilated part; instead of enjoying the pleasure of a perfect whole.

But, perhaps it will be said that children like variety, and therefore a diversity of subjects is demanded. But there is a wide distinction between what is variegated and what is heterogeneous or conflicting. Quite as well may it be said, that children like continuity, not less than variety. Agencies working to a common end, elements expanding and evolving into a full and symmetrical development, present a variety more accordant to nature than



that of patchwork. An easy and gliding transition from topic to topic is far preferable to a sudden revulsion, which seems, as it were, to arrest the mental machinery, and work it backwards. Besides, all needful variety is as attainable in long pieces as in short ones. An author may pass from grave to humorous, from description to narration, from philosophizing to moralizing, or even from prose to poetry, without shocking the mind by precipitous leaps from one subject to another.

Another mental exercise of the highest value is not only overlooked, but rendered wholly impossible, by this violent transference of the mind through a series of repugnant subjects. The true order of mental advancement is, from the primitive meaning of words to their modified meaning in particular connections, and then to a clear apprehension of the import of sentences and paragraphs. After these come two other mental processes, which are the crowning constituents of intellectual greatness. The first process is a comparison with each other of all the parts presented, in order to discern their agreement or repugnance, and to form a judgment of their conduciveness to a proposed result. For this purpose, the mind must summon the whole train of thought into its presence, and see for itself whether the conclusion is authorized to which its assent is demanded. Here the reader must see whether the part he now reads, as compared with the preceding, is consistent or contradictory. Otherwise he may be marched and counter-marched through all regions of belief, and even be made to tread backwards in his own footsteps without knowing it. How can a juror judge of the soundness or fallacy of an advocate's argument, if he cannot reproduce it and compare its different points; if he cannot, if a military phrase may be used, bring up the long column of argu-

ments and deploy them into line, so as to survey them all at a glance? Such a habit of mind confers a wonderful superiority on its possessor; and therefore it should be cultivated by all practicable means. Great as it is in some men, it has grown up, under favoring circumstances, from the feeblest beginnings; and the minds of all children may be managed so as to stifle or strengthen it. Of course, all consecutiveness of thought is dispersed by a scrap-book.

I will take a few examples from a reading-book now in use in some of our schools. A most humorous disquisition "On the head-dress of ladies" is immediately followed by another disquisition, "On a future state of eternal happiness or perdition;" a passage from Milton's "Creation of the world" leads on "The facetious history of John Gilpin;" Thomson's "Hymn to the Deity" ushers in "Merrick's chameleon;" and two minutes' reading from Blair's "Sermon on the Death of Christ" precedes Lord Chesterfield's "Speech on Pensions." Surely, the habit of mind I have endeavored to describe is here impossible. There is no continuity in the subject-matter for the mind to act on.

The preceding remarks contemplate the reader or hearer, as engaged in fixing the whole train of the author's thought in his own mind, for the purpose of comparing its different parts. But to make reading in the highest degree valuable, another mental process still is necessary. It is not enough merely to discern the agreement or disagreement of the associated parts, heard or read; but in the progress of the exercise, we ought to look to the right and left, and compare the positions of the speaker or writer with our own observation, experience and former judgment, so as to obtain new arguments for our own opinions where there is a coincidence,

and be led to re-examine them with conscientious impartiality when opposed. In this way only can we modify and correct our own views by the help of other minds. In this way only can we give permanence to our acquisitions; and what is rapidity in acquisition, without durability in retention? It is the absence of these two mental exercises which makes so vast a portion of the reading of our community utterly barren. Of course, only the older scholars can fairly realize this degree of intelligent reading. But after a little practice, all children are capable of reading with such an open and inquiring mind, that if any thing occurs in the lesson, which is connected with their own recent experience or observation, the two things will be immediately associated. This will grow into a habit of thinking not only of what they read, but of associating and comparing their previous knowledge upon the same subject with it; and it will be the best possible stimulant to the inventive powers. It will also prevent them from blindly adopting whatever is communicated to them by others. They will acquire such a power, at once, of expanded views and of thorough investigation, that if afterwards, in the practical business of life, any plan or course of policy is presented to them, and there be a difficulty in it, they will see it; and if there be any way of obviating that difficulty, they will see that also.

To mitigate the calamity of unintelligent reading, various inventions have been sought out; by some of which it may have been slightly relieved, while others seem wholly illusive. Spelling-books have been prepared, purporting to give synonymous words, arranged in parallel columns. On some pages two columns, on others three columns, are found, where the words, which are placed horizontally, in regard to each other, are

alleged to be synonymous. Thus single words are supposed to be defined by single words, as in the following example, which is taken from one of them : —

*“ comedy,      tragedy,      drama.”*

It is a remark of Dr. Blair, that “hardly in any language are there two words that convey the same idea.” Dr. Campbell, also, the author of that able work, “The Philosophy of Rhetoric,” observes, that “there are few words in any language, (particularly such as relate to operations and feelings of the mind,) which are strictly univocal.” To teach children that any considerable number, even of the primitive words in the English language, can be reduced to doublets and triplets of synonymes, or that there are many cases where words can be interchangeably used, would subject them to the certainty, both of being mistaken by others, and of mistaking whatever they might hear or read ; and it would destroy the power of aptness in the selection of words, upon which all the accuracy, elegance and force of diction depend. Surely, if a large majority of the words of our language have, each, one or two synonymous words, it would seem advisable for the government of the “Republic of Letters,” at once to reduce it to one-half or one-third of its present bulk, by discarding the superfluous parts, and thus save the young the labor of learning and the old the trouble of writing and reading a double or treble-sized vocabulary. But if, as is further observed by Dr. Blair, any person, “conversant with the propriety of the language, will always be able to observe something that distinguishes any two of its words,” then a book would be greatly to be preferred which should show that it has no synonymes. Even if our language

furnished synonymes, and these were carefully collated, according to the above plan, it would seem quite as possible for the learner, with a little additional labor, to get two or three words, without any glimmer of meaning, as to get one. It is rarely possible to explain any word of unknown meaning by any other single word. Our most common words are susceptible, probably, of a hundred significations, according to the connection in which they are used. Their value is constantly changing, according to the context. It is like the value of pieces upon a chess-board; the same piece, in one position, being almost worthless, in another position commanding the game. It is this fact which makes it such vanity and uselessness to read words, without reference to their significations.

Another method for teaching significations consists in the use of the dictionary. This is far less fallacious than the former, because no dictionary ever defines by a single word. It usually gives a number of words and short sentences, from a comparison of which, the principal idea, common to them all, can be separated from the accessory ideas peculiar to each. Although, therefore, it is a meagre resource for a learner, it is far better than any definition, by a single inflexible word, can be. There are, however, very serious objections to this mode. Should the pupil take the words of the dictionary, in course, he would study double the number which he will have occasion to use in after-life; and it seems a misfortune, that scholars, who do not go to school half long enough to learn what is needful, should spend half their time while there in learning what is superfluous. Nor do dictionaries indicate what words are in reputable use, what are more appropriate to poetical, what to prose writings, and so forth. But should the

words to be studied or omitted be marked for the learner, or a dictionary be prepared, containing the former only; still an insuperable objection would remain, in consequence of the order, or rather the entire want of order, in regard to meaning, in which the words are presented. For, while the words come alphabetically, the ideas come chaotically. The learner is whirled backwards and forwards, carried through time and space, presented with matter and mind, principal and incident, action and passion, all in a single column. Nothing can be conceived more heterogeneous than the ideas necessarily resulting from an alphabetical arrangement of the words; and were children to be drilled at much length on such exercises, it would argue great soundness of mind if their intellects were not a little unsettled. Suppose a professor in the natural sciences, instead of teaching his sciences in a natural order, should go into the fields, and halting anywhere, at random, should take a spot no larger than is sufficient for the growth of a single blade of grass, and should proceed to lecture upon whatever was found at that single point. He would be obliged to run over the subjects of geology, mineralogy, chemistry, botany, and perhaps entomology, without leaving the spot. Nor would this be a course half so devious and erratic, as that of studying definitions through the columns of a dictionary.

Another device to fill vacuity by pouring in vacuity, is this; — a book is prepared, in which the spelling and reading lessons alternate. First come a few columns of words, and then a page of apothegms and synopses of universal truths, not occupying, perhaps, more than a line each; some one word in the spelling-columns being incorporated into each of these short sentences. The force of the reasons against the preceding mode is but little abated when

applied to this. This motley company of sentences repels all interest on the part of the learner. Topics, more alien from each other, and more bewildering to the mind, could not be found, if one were to stick a pin through all the leaves of a book, and then to read continuously all the sentences through which the puncture was made. As many-colored and diverse-shaped objects, flitting swiftly before the eye, will make no stable impression upon the retina ; so a multitude of incongruous ideas and feelings, trooping hurriedly before the mental vision, can leave no enduring traces of outline, aspect or quality upon the mind. A rapid succession of discordant images will inflict distraction upon the mind of an adult ; — how much more certain are they to do it upon that of a child ! The power of passing abruptly from one subject of thought to another, without mental disturbance, requires long habit and familiarity with the matters presented. Children can have neither.

But I will not occupy further time in exposing empirical plans for acquiring a ready and apposite use of our language. After experimenting with every scheme, I believe we shall be driven back to a single resource ; — and not reluctantly, for that resource is sure and adequate. Language is to be learned, where it is used, as skill in handling the implements of an art is acquired by practising with them upon their appropriate objects. It is to be learned by conversation, and by the daily reading of such books, as with the aid of free questioning on the part of the pupil, and full explanations on that of the teacher, can be thoroughly mastered. The ideas of the learner are to be brought out, and set, objectively, before his own eyes, like a picture. Any error can then be pointed out. The boundary-line can be traced between his knowledge and his ignorance. A pupil may recite a lesson with

literal correctness, respecting the boundaries of the different States in the Union; and it may be impossible for the teacher to determine whether this is done by a mental reference to divisional lines and adjacent territory, or whether it is done by remembering the words as they stand in the geography. But if the pupil can delineate a correct map of the United States on a blackboard, it is then certain that he has the prototype of it in his mind. So if the pupil applies language to something known to both parties, the teacher can then perceive *whether the language is adjusted to the thing*; and, if it is not, he can ascertain whether the error arises from a misconception of the thing, or from an unskilful use of words in describing it. Oral instruction, therefore, to some extent, respecting known objects and such as can be graphically described, should precede reading; and should accompany it ever afterwards, though, perhaps, with diminishing frequency. Early practice, in noting the real distinctions in the qualities of sensible substances, will give accuracy to language; and when the child passes from present and sensible objects to unseen or mental ones, a previously acquired accuracy of language will impart accuracy to the new ideas. Hence, too, the scenes of the first reading-lessons should be laid in the household, the play-ground, among the occupations of men, and the surrounding objects of nature, so that the child's notions can be rectified at every step in the progress. This rectification will be impossible, if the notions of the pupil can be brought to no common and intelligible standard. We must believe, too, that the Creator of the human mind, and of the material world in which it is placed, established a harmony and correspondence between them; so that the objects of nature are pre-adapted to the development of the intellect, as the tempers, dispositions and manners of the family are to develop the



moral powers. The objects of natural history, — descriptions of beasts, birds, fishes, insects, trees, flowers, and unorganized substances, should form the subjects of the earliest intellectual lessons. A knowledge of these facts lays the foundation for a knowledge of the principles or sciences which respectively grow out of them. We are physically connected with earth, air, water, light ; we are dependent, for health and comfort, upon a knowledge of their properties and uses, and many of the vastest structures of the intellect are reared upon these foundations. Lineally related to these is the whole family of the useful arts. These classes of subjects are not only best calculated to foster the early growth of the perceptive, inventive and reasoning powers ; but the language appropriate to them excludes vagueness and ambiguity, and compels every mistake to betray itself. Voyages and travels, also, accompanied as they always should be with geography, present definite materials both for thought and expression. Just as early as a habit of exactness is formed in using words to express things, all the subjects of consciousness may be successively brought within the domain of instruction. The ideal world can then be entered, as it were with a lamp in the hand, and all its wonders portrayed. Affection, justice, veracity, impartiality, self-sacrifice, love to man and love to God, — all carried out into action, — can be illustrated by examples, after the learner has acquired a medium through which he can see all the circumstances which make deeds magnanimous, heroic, god-like. Here the biography of great and good men belongs. This is a department of literature, equally vivifying to the intellect and the morals ; — bestowing useful knowledge and inspiring noble sentiments. And much of the language appropriate to it almost belongs to another dialect ; — fervid, electric, radiant. At the earliest

practicable period, let composition or translation be commenced. By composition, I do not mean an essay "On Friendship," or "On Honor;" nor that a young Miss of twelve years should write a homily "On the duties of a Queen," or a lad, impatient of his nonage, "On the shortness of human life;" — but that the learner should apply, on familiar subjects, the language he thinks best, to the ideas and emotions he perceives clearest and feels strongest, *to see how well he can make them fit each other*, — first in sentences, or short paragraphs, then in more extended productions. If the pupil's knowledge outruns his language, — as is often the case with the most promising, — then a more copious diction is to be sought; but if language overgrows ideas, it is to be reduced, though it be by knife and cautery.

It is only in this way, — by reading or translating good authors, aided by oral instructions and by lexicographers, but, most of all, by early habit, — that any one can acquire such easy mastery over the copiousness and flexibility of our mother-tongue, as to body forth definitely, and at will, any thought or thing, or any combination of thoughts and things, found in the consciousness of men, or in the amplitude of nature; — in no other way can any one acquire that terseness and condensing force of expression, which is a constituent in the highest oratory, which clusters weightiest thoughts into briefest spaces, reminding without repeating, each sentence speeding straight onward to the end, while every salient epithet opens deep vistas to the right and left; — and in this way alone can any one ever learn the picture-words of that tongue, wherewith the poet repays nature fourfold for all her beauties, giving her back brighter landscapes, and clearer waters, and sweeter melodies, than any she had ever lent to him. By such processes alone can one of

the most wonderful gifts of God,—the faculty of speech,—be dutifully cultivated and enlarged.

It would be rendering a useful service, to follow out, rightly, and in detail, the natural consequences of this imperfect manner of teaching our language, after the children have passed from the enforced routine of the school-room to a free choice of their own intellectual amusements and recreations. I can here only hint at them. The mere language of sensation and of appetite is common to all. Even the most illiterate are familiar with it. Every one, too, either from his own experience, or from the observation of others, is made acquainted with the emotions of fear, hope, jealousy, anger, revenge, and with the explosive phraseology in which those passions are vented. Now the diction, appropriate and almost peculiar to the manifestations of the coarser and more animal part of our nature, is almost as distinct as though it were a separate language from the style in which questions of social right and duty, questions of morals, and even of philosophy, when popularly treated, are discussed. Young minds love excitement, and, to very many of those who are just entering upon the stage of life, books furnish the readiest and the most reputable means for mental stimulus. What else, then, can reasonably be expected, than that the graduates of our schoolrooms, who, by acquiring a knowledge of the coarser and more sensual parts of our language, possess a key to that kind of reading which is mainly conversant with the lower propensities of human nature, should use the key with which they have been furnished, to satisfy desires which nature has imparted? But, having no key wherewith to open the treasures of intellect, of taste, of that humane literature which is purified from the dross of base passions, they turn away from these elevating themes in weariness and disgust,

and thus stifle the better aspirations of their nature. These treasures are locked up in a language they do not understand ; and no person will long endure the weariness of reading without thought or emotion. May not this explain, in part at least, why our youth of both sexes, who wish to know something, or to appear to know something, of what is called the literature of the day, spend months and years over the despicable "love and murder" books, by which the reading portion of mankind is so sorely afflicted?—books which inflame passions and appetites that are strong enough by nature, while they blind and stupefy every faculty and sentiment which exalt the character into wisdom and excellence. The most limited fund of words, and a mere intellectual pauperism in powers of thought, are abundantly sufficient to enable one to understand a buccaneer's history, and all its intoxicating incidents of piracies, murders, and scuttled ships ;—or to get vivid notions of loathsome crimes, perpetrated by the unfortunate victims of ignorance and of vicious institutions. For the readers of such books, the best minds in the world might as well have never been created. By a different course of training, many of our youth, whose imaginations are now revelling over these flagitious works, might have been prepared for high enjoyment won from companionship with noble characters, from a study of their own spiritual natures, or from an investigation of the sublime laws of the material universe, and the operation of its beneficent physical agencies.

Another large class of our citizens scarcely consult any oracle, either for their literature or for their politics, but the daily newspaper. Wholly ignorant of the language in which argumentative and profound disquisitions, on subjects of policy or questions of government, are carried on, why should we wonder that so many of them feel

less interest in dispassionate, instructive appeals to reason, than in the savage idioms of party warfare? The states of mind thus excited are wholly incompatible with discriminating judgment, with impartiality, with that deliberation and truth-seeking anxiety, which are indispensable to the formation of correct opinions, and which lead to conduct worthy of free citizens. I would not attribute too efficient an agency to this cause, but if it only tends to such disastrous results by the slightest approximation, it furnishes another powerful argument for a thorough reform in our practice.

During the first year of my officiating as Secretary of the Board, very numerous applications were made to me, from almost all parts of the State, to recommend class-books for the schools, or to state what books were considered best by the Board, or by myself. As the Board had adopted no order, nor were invested with any express authority, by law, upon the subject, I uniformly abstained even from expressing my opinion; but for the purpose of learning, authentically, what were the prevalent views of the community, I inserted, in my last circular to the school committees, the following question: "Would it be generally acceptable to the friends of Education in your town, to have the Board of Education recommend books for the use of the Schools?" This gave to school committees ample opportunity to consult with the friends of Education, in their respective towns, and opened a way to obtain a full and fair representation of the wishes of the public. From this, as the principal source of information, somewhat corroborated and extended by other means, it appears that the friends of Education, in twenty towns, containing, in the aggregate, a population of about thirty-five thousand inhabitants, declare that such a recommendation would not be acceptable. In one, containing

eighteen thousand inhabitants, they say, "we feel so well satisfied with our own selection of books, as to have no wish, farther than to see how far the views of different practical men agree." Ten towns wish to have the Board *recommend*, but not *prescribe*; two towns, to have the Board *recommend* and *prescribe*; and one, that the Board may be directed to *prescribe* by an act of the Legislature. It also appears that the friends of Education in towns containing more than seven-eighths of the population of the State are in favor of having the Board of Education *recommend* books for the use of the Schools.

The expediency of a *recommendation*, by the Board, of class-books for the schools, leaving it optional with the committees to adopt such recommendation or not, is a question so exclusively within the competency of the Board, that I shall not presume to express any opinion concerning it. Considerations for and against such recommendation may be supposed to bear with different degrees of force, in regard to different species of books; — as geographies, grammars, and spelling or reading books. In my Report of last year, I set forth some of the very serious inconveniences resulting from the multiplicity of books now in use. I will here only add, that if the Board should assume the labor of examining and recommending any kind of school-books, I trust they will not allow so favorable an opportunity to pass, without securing a better quality of materials and workmanship than go to the formation of some books now in use. It is too obvious to be mentioned, that in case of a uniformity of books, they would be furnished much cheaper than at present, as measures would, of course, be taken to prevent monopoly.

As the law now stands, in order to entitle a town to receive its distributive share of the income of the School.

Fund, the committee must make oath, that the town, "at their last annual meeting, raised the sum of —— dollars, *to pay the wages of instructors solely.*" In preparing the last "Annual Abstract," I found this certificate the subject of frequent alteration. Although the law prescribed a certain form of oath as a condition precedent, the school committees altered the form, and then made oath to a form unknown to the law. The reason was, that very few towns raised money "to pay the wages of instructors solely," and, therefore, though they had raised a sufficient sum for schools to entitle them to a share of the fund, they had not raised it in the particular form contemplated by the certificate.

I endeavored this year to ascertain the form of the vote, adopted by the towns, in raising school-money. Owing, however, to a non-compliance on the part of many school committees with my request, I have obtained a copy of the form used the current year, from only one hundred and ten towns. But six of these one hundred and ten towns raised money "to pay the wages of instructors solely." In almost all the others, the terms used are "for the support of schools," or some equivalent expression. It is very desirable that the certificate should be conformed to the vote, or the vote to the certificate.

In my Report of last year, I exposed the alarming deficiency of moral and religious instruction then found to exist in our schools. That deficiency, in regard to religious instruction, could only be explained by supposing that school committees, whose duty it is to prescribe school-books, had not found any books at once expository of the doctrines of revealed religion, and also free from such advocacy of the "tenets" of particular sects of Christians, as brought them, in their opinion, within the scope of the legal prohibition. And hence they felt

obliged to exclude books, which, but for their denominational views, they would have been glad to introduce. No candid mind could ever, for a moment, accept this as evidence of an indifference to moral and religious instruction in the schools; but only as proof that proper manuals had not been found, by which the great object of moral and religious instruction could be secured, without any infringement of the statutory regulation. The time for the committees to make another return not having yet arrived, it is impossible to say, whether books, having the above object in view, have been since introduced into any more of the schools. I am happy, however, to say, that a knowledge of that deficiency, then for the first time exposed to the public, has turned the attention of some of the friends of Education to the subject, and that efforts are now making to supply the desideratum. Of course, I shall not be here understood as referring to the Scriptures, as it is well known that they are used in almost all the schools, either as a devotional or as a reading book.

I close this second Report, inspired by opposite reasons to renewed exertions in this sacred cause; — being not more encouraged by what has already been accomplished, than stimulated by what remains to be done.





## APPENDIX.

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(A) p. 94.

THE detailed reports made to the Board of Education in compliance with this provision proved to be the most important act of the movement that created it. The Secretary was occupied three months of every alternate year in collating from these reports such extracts as were necessary to show the condition of the schools; and these were published in a book called "Abstract of School Returns," which were distributed to each town, and enabled all to see what improvements or what deficiencies existed. This work has gone over the world, and has been considered the most valuable educational document ever printed. From it was subsequently gathered a statistical pamphlet called the "Graduated Tables," which, Mr. Mann used to say, was the only stroke of genius that characterized the administration of his office. It recorded the towns in the order of the appropriations of money for education made by each; and such was the stimulating effect, that from year to year the towns changed places in a very striking manner. It was found that many small towns appropriated far more money in proportion to the population than even some of the large cities. The transformation of the list was sometimes so great as to show the name of a town that stood at the foot of the list one year, at the head of it the next. So eloquent are figures.

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(B.)

*Letter from DR. SAMUEL B. WOODWARD, Superintendent of the State Lunatic Hospital at Worcester.— See p. 441.*

*Worcester, March 14, 1838.*

HON. HORACE MANN, *Secretary of the Board of Education:*

DEAR SIR, — Your note and queries, respecting the construction of schoolhouses, came to hand yesterday. I improve the earliest opportunity to reply.

*First*, as to the ill effects of high and narrow benches, and seats without backs.

*High* and *narrow* seats are not only extremely uncomfortable for the young scholar, tending constantly to make him restless and noisy, disturbing his temper, and preventing his attention to his books, but they have also a direct tendency to produce deformity of the limbs.

If the seat is too narrow, half the thigh only rests upon it; if too high, the feet cannot reach the floor; the consequence is, that the limbs are suspended on the centre of the thigh. Now, as the limbs of children are pliable or flexible, they are easily made to grow out of shape, and become crooked, by such an awkward and unnatural position.

Seats without backs have an equally unfavorable influence upon the spinal column. If no rest is afforded the backs of children while seated, they almost necessarily assume a bent and crooked position; such a position often assumed, or long continued, tends to that deformity which has become extremely common with children in modern times, and leads to disease of the spine in innumerable instances, especially with delicate female children.

The seats in schoolrooms should be so constructed that the whole thigh can rest upon them, and at the same time the foot stand firmly upon the floor; all seats should have backs high enough to reach the shoulder-blades; low backs, although better than none, are far less easy and useful than high ones, and will not prevent pain and uneasiness after sitting a considerable time. Young children should be permitted to change their position often, to stand on their feet, to march, and to visit the play-ground. One hour is as long as any child, under ten years of age, should be confined at once; and four hours as long as he should be confined to his seat in one day.

*Second Query.* — “What general effects will be produced upon the health of children by stinting their supply of fresh air through defects in ventilation?”

An answer to this query will involve some chemical principles, in connection with the animal economy, not extensively and fully understood.

The blood, as it circulates through the vessels in our bodies, accumulates a deleterious principle called CARBON, which is a poison itself, and must be discharged frequently, or it becomes dangerous to life. In the process of respiration or breathing, this poisonous principle unites in the lungs with a proportion of the oxygen of the air, and

forms *carbonic acid*, which is expelled from the lungs at each expiration. The proportion of oxygen in the air received into the lungs is about twenty-one in the hundred; in the air expelled, about eighteen in the hundred;—the proportion of carbonic acid in the inhaled air is one part in the hundred, in the exhaled air about four parts in the hundred. By respiration, an adult person spoils, or renders unfit for this vital process, about one gallon of air in a minute. By this great consumption of pure air in a schoolroom, made tight and filled with scholars, it will be easily seen that the whole air will soon be rendered impure, and unfit for the purpose for which it is designed. If we continue to inhale this contaminated air, rendered constantly worse the longer we are confined in it, this process in the lungs will not be performed in a perfect manner; the carbon will not all escape from the blood, but will be circulated to the brain, and produce its deleterious effects upon that organ, to which it is a poison. If no opportunity be afforded for its regular escape, death will take place in a few minutes, as in strangulation by a cord, drowning, and immersion in irrespirable air. The cause of death is the retention and circulation of this poisonous principle in all these cases.

If a smaller portion is allowed to circulate through the vessels than will prove fatal, it produces stupor, syncope, and other dangerous effects upon the brain and nerves. In still less quantity, it produces dulness, sleepiness, and incapacitates us for all mental efforts and physical activity. The dulness of a school, after having been long in session in a close room, and of a congregation, during a protracted religious service, are often attributable to this cause *mainly*, if not *solely*. Both teacher and scholar, preacher and hearer, are often greatly affected in this way, without being at all sensible of the cause. Fifty scholars will very soon contaminate the air of a schoolroom at the rate of a gallon a minute.

Suppose a schoolroom to be thirty feet square and nine feet high, it will contain 13,996,000 cubic inches of atmospheric air. According to Davy and Thompson, two accurate and scientific chemists, one individual respire and contaminates 6,500 cubic inches of air in a minute. Fifty scholars will respire 325,000 cubic inches in the same time. In about forty minutes, all the air of such a room will have become contaminated, if fresh supplies are not provided. The quantity of carbonic acid produced by the respiration of fifty scholars will be about 750 cubic inches in an hour.

From these calculations, we must see how soon the air of a school-

room becomes unfit to sustain the animal powers, and how unfavorable to vigorous mental effort such a contaminated atmosphere must prove to be. To avoid this most serious evil, is a desideratum, which has not yet been reached in the construction of schoolhouses.

In my opinion, every house and room which is closed for any considerable time upon a concourse of people should be warmed by pure air from out of doors, heated by furnaces placed in a cellar, (and every schoolhouse should have a cellar,) or in some contiguous apartment, so that the supply of air for the fire should not be from the schoolroom. Furnaces for warming external air may be constructed cheaply, so as effectually to answer the purposes of warmth and ventilation.

When a quantity of warm fresh air is forced into a schoolroom by means of a furnace, the foul air is forced out at every crevice, and at the ventilating passages; the currents are all warm, quite to these passages.

But if the room is warmed by a stove or fireplace, the cold air from without rushes in at every passage and every crevice, and while the parts of the body nearest the fire are too warm, the currents of cold air rushing to the fire to sustain the combustion keep all the other parts cold and uncomfortable. This is a most direct way to produce disease; nothing can affect the system more unfavorably than currents of cold air coming upon us when quite warm.

I have said that schoolhouses should have cellars under them. The floor of a building without a cellar is always cold, and often damp; this tends to keep the feet of scholars cold, while the head, in a region of air much warmer, will be kept hot. This is both unnatural and unhealthful. The feet should always be kept warm and the head cool. No person can enjoy good health whose feet are habitually cold. In schoolrooms heated by stoves, the feet are very liable to be cold, while the upper stratum of air, kept hot and dry by a long reach of pipe, produces a very unpleasant and unfavorable state of the head — headache, vertigo, and syncope often take place in such a room.

The human body is so constituted, that it can bear almost any degree of heat or cold, if the change be not too sudden, and all parts of it be subjected to it alike. We find no particular inconvenience from respiring air at the temperature of ninety degrees on the one hand, or at zero on the other; but inequalities of temperature, at the same time, affect us very differently, and can never be suffered for a long time without danger.

There is one consideration in the preparation of furnaces for warm-

ing rooms, that should not be overlooked. The object should be to force into the room a large quantity of air, heated a few degrees above the temperature required, rather than a small quantity at a much higher temperature. The air-chamber should be capacious, and the passages free. The air should always be taken from out of doors, and never from a cellar. The air of a cellar is often impure itself, and, if pure, a cellar that is at all tight cannot furnish an adequate supply. The whole air of a schoolroom should be changed at least every hour; if oftener, it would be better. If a cellar is not much larger than the room above it, this supply will soon be exhausted also. The air of the cellar may be sufficient to supply the combustion of the fuel; this is all it should do — and for this purpose it is better than air from out of doors, as the coldness of this checks the heat, and diminishes the temperature of the fire, and its power of heating the furnace.

In giving my views on this subject, I have been so desultory as to embrace nearly all that I can say on the other queries proposed to me. At any rate, my letter is already of an unreasonable length, and I must come to a close. Wishing you every success in the arduous duties of your present station, I remain truly and affectionately yours,

S. B. WOODWARD.

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(C.)

*Extract of a letter from BENJAMIN SILLIMAN, Professor of Chemistry in Yale College, in reply to an inquiry similar to the SECOND proposed to Dr. Woodward. — See p. 441.*

OF our atmosphere, only one-fifth part, by volume, is fitted to sustain life. That portion is oxygen gas; the remaining four-fifths being azote or nitrogen gas, which, when breathed alone, kills by suffocation. The withdrawing of the oxygen gas, by respiration or otherwise, destroys the power of the atmosphere to sustain life, and this alone furnishes a decisive reason why fresh air must be constantly supplied, in order to support animal life. But this is not all. Every contact of the air with the lungs generates in the human subject from six to eight per cent of carbonic-acid gas — the same gas that often destroys the lives of people who descend incautiously into wells, or who remain in close rooms, with a charcoal fire not under a flue. This gas — the

carbonic acid — kills, it is true, by suffocation, as azote does, and as water acts in drowning. But this is not all. It acts *positively*, with a peculiar and malignant energy, upon the vital powers, which, even when life is not instantly destroyed, it prostrates or paralyzes, probably through the nervous system.

I find by numerous trials made with my own lungs, that a confined portion of air, — sufficient, however, to fill the lungs perfectly with a full inspiration, — is so contaminated by a single contact, that a candle will scarcely burn in it at all ; and, after three contacts. the candle will then go out, and an animal would die in it as quickly as if immersed in azote, or even in water.

It is evident, therefore, that a constant renewal of the air is indispensable to safety as regards life, and no person can be compelled to breathe, again and again, the same portions of air, without manifest injury to health, and, it may be, danger to life.

It follows, then, that the air of apartments, and especially of those occupied by many persons at once, ought to be thrown off by a free ventilation ; and, when blown from the lungs, the same air ought not to be again inhaled until it has been purified from the carbonic-acid gas, and its due proportion of oxygen gas restored. This is effected by the upper surface of the green leaves of trees and plants, when acted upon by the direct solar rays. The carbonic-acid gas is then decomposed, the carbon is absorbed, to sustain, in part, the life of the plant, by affording it one element of its food, while the oxygen gas is liberated, and restored to the atmosphere.

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(D.)

*Extract of a letter from DR. SAMUEL G. HOWE, Director of the Institution for the Education of the Blind, in Pearl Street, Boston. — See p. 472.*

I TAKE it for granted, that the existence of blindness in the human race, like every other physical infirmity, is the consequence of departure from the natural laws of God ; that the proportion of blind persons in every community is dependent upon the comparative degree of violation of the natural laws ; and that scientific observation can in almost every case point to the kind and degree of violation.

Imperfect vision, partial and total blindness, are more common

among men than animals, and in civilized than in savage or barbarous nations. It seems to be well ascertained, that blindness is more common as we approach the equator; and that on the same parallel it is more frequent in dry, sandy soils, than in humid ones.

It is supposed by some, that, in very high latitudes, blindness is more frequent than in the temperate zones, on account of the strong reflection of the sun's rays by the snow; but besides that we have no statistical returns to confirm this opinion, there are other causes which make it doubtful; the solar rays are much less powerful, the days are short, and the tendency to local or general inflammations and congestions of blood is much less in cold than in warm climates. Without, however, dwelling upon general rules, I will come at once to causes operating in our own climate.

Any one who has reflected that man was created with a perfect physical organization — that his eye, the noblest organ of sense, was fitted to reach to a distant star, or to examine the texture of the gossamer's web, will be struck by the fact that every tenth man he meets is either near-sighted, or far-sighted, or weak-eyed, or has some affection or other of the vision. Now, the frequency of this departure from the natural state of the vision is not a fortuitous circumstance; if there were but a single case, it must be referable to a particular cause; and, *à fortiori*, when it prevails in every section of the country, and in every generation. Let us consider the greatest derangement of vision — blindness; there are very few cases where the eye is totally insensible to light; let us call every person blind whose organ of vision is so permanently deranged, that he cannot distinguish the nails upon his fingers; for many persons can see how many fingers are held up between the eye and a strong light, who cannot see the nails. Of persons blind to this degree, and of those totally blind, there are about one in two thousand in the United States. This calculation is warranted by statistical returns, which are liable to error, only in putting down too few.

Of these six thousand five hundred persons, but very few lose their vision by wounds, injuries, or acute inflammation: the great majority are blind in consequence of violation of the natural laws, either by themselves or their parents; for I hold it to be indisputable, that almost every case of congenital blindness is the penalty paid by the sufferer for the fault of the parent or progenitor. The number of cases of hereditary blindness, and of hereditary tendency to diseases of the eye, which have come under my observation, have established this beyond all doubt in my own mind.



I have known many cases, where a parent, with defective vision, has had half his children blind; and one case, where both parents had defective vision, and all their children, *seven in number*, were blind.

There are, then, causes at work in our own community, which destroy the vision of one two-thousandth part of our population, and impair the vision of a much greater part; and although each individual thinks himself secure, and attributes the blindness, or defective vision of his neighbor, to some accidental or peculiar circumstance, from which *he* himself enjoys immunity, yet the *cause* will certainly have its *effect*; the violation of the natural laws must have their penalty and their victim — as a ball, shot into a dense crowd, must hit somebody. It is incumbent, then, upon each one, in his individual capacity, to avoid the remote and predisposing, as well as the immediate causes of impaired vision; and it is incumbent on those, who have an influence upon the condition and regulations of society, to use that influence for the same end.

It would lead to tedious details to consider the various modes in which each individual or each parent should guard against the impairment of vision; but there are some obvious dangers to which children are exposed in schools, which may be pointed out in a few words.

You will often see a class of children reading or writing with the sun shining on their books, or writing in a dark afternoon with their backs to the window, and their bodies obstructing its little light; and if you tell the master he is perilling the eyesight of his scholars, he thinks he gives you a complete discomfiture by saying, that he has kept school so for ten years, and never knew a boy to become blind; nevertheless, it is a cause of evil, and so surely as it exists it will be followed by its effect.

A boy reading by twilight, or by the blaze of a fire, or by moonlight even, will tell you he does not feel the effects; nevertheless, they follow as closely as the shadow upon the substance; and if, ten years afterwards, you see the boy selecting glasses at an optician's, and ask him what caused his imperfect vision, he will tell you that there was no *particular* cause; that is, the amount of evil done at any particular time was not perceptible — as a toper, whose system is tottering to ruin, cannot believe that any *particular* glass of brandy ever did him any harm.

We should never read but in the erect posture; we should never read when the arterial system is in a state of high action; we should

never read with too much or too little light; we should never read with a dazzling light of the sun, or fire, striking on our face.

Schoolrooms should be arranged in such a manner, that the light of the sun can be admitted in the right direction — not dazzling the eyes, but striking upon the books; there should be facilities for admitting the light fully in dark weather, and for excluding it partly when the sun shines brilliantly.

I believe an attention to the physiology and laws of vision, by parents and instructors, would be of great benefit to children, and diminish the number of opticians; for as surely as a stone thrown up will come down, so surely does exposure to causes of evil bring the evil, at some time, in some way, upon somebody. Truly yours,

SAMUEL G. HOWE.

HORACE MANN, Esq.,

*Secretary of the Board of Education.*

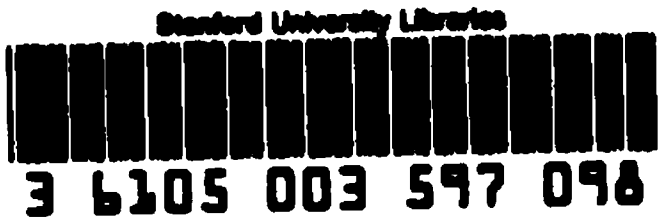
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